CLASSICS FOR CHILDREN

CHESTERFIELD'S LETTERS

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CHESTERFIELD'S LETTERS

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WITH LIFE

BY

M. F. WHEATON

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LIFE OF LORD CHESTERFIELD.

LORD CHESTERFIELD.

PHILIP DORMER STANHOPE, fourth earl of Chesterfield, was born in the year 1694 and died in 1773. His life, therefore, extended through the first three quarters of the eighteenth century which were made eventful in English history by the establishment of the House of Brunswick upon the throne, by the development of Constitutional law, and by the rise of great ministers as leaders of the two political parties.

Lord Chesterfield was interested in all the public questions of the day. He was a faithful servant of the crown at home and in Ireland, and showed himself an accomplished diplomat on several missions to foreign countries. He was a man of scholarly tastes, of large attainments, of refined and elegant manners in an age when English society was remarkable for its lack of good breeding, and of scrupulous exactness in the performance of all obligations.

On the other hand and what seems oftener remembered of him, he was, in spite of these excellent qualities, in his political methods, a schemer and an intriguer; while in social life, his character is stained by vices in which he indulged to an extent that rendered him conspicuous among his worldly contemporaries, even in that age, when the standard of morals was much lower than at present.

His defects have been considered to outweigh his virtues so completely that his name would have long since

fallen into oblivion, if it had not been for the series of letters addressed to his son, selections from which form the present volume. They cover a period of about thirty years, beginning with the first playful letters to a child of five years and continuing on steadily and with great frequency, to the death of the son at the age of thirty-six.

They were prompted by fatherly affection and anxiety and they were written in the strict privacy of domestic life, entirely without thought of public praise or censure. It never occurred to him that the letters in which he lived over again his own boyhood and youth with his child, from whom he was separated most of the time, would be given to the public and become a part of the standard English literature of his century. At that time the death of a great man was not inevitably followed by a volume of his letters as is the custom now. Chesterfield had no reason to anticipate such publicity. They were first published by his son's widow in 1774, a year after the death of the writer, as a financial speculation.

This remarkable collection deals with almost every department of knowledge except nature and religion. Of religion he writes to his son, "I don't speak of religion, I am not in a position to do so, — the excellent Mr. Harte (the boy's tutor) will do that." But no other subject, which he thinks may be of assistance to the child whom he intends to fit for a diplomatic career, escaped comment and amplification in these familiar letters.

They are a frank expression of his nature. However he might have plotted and studied effects and appearances in his other undertakings, in these letters he is, at least, genuine. They reveal him at his best, but the

worldliness that corrupted his own better nature taints the sound wisdom and excellent advice; wisdom and advice that would otherwise be of great value from a man of the experience and judgment that Chesterfield had. His illustrious contemporary, the great Dr. Johnson, who, for reasons of his own, would have no special inclination to overestimate the value of these letters, said of them, "Take out the immorality and they should be put into the hands of every young gentleman." The world has since seen no reason to differ with the opinion of the worthy doctor.

To enter into the spirit of the letters, one must remember their individual and not general purpose. They were for young Philip Stanhope and no other person. He was a boy who early showed excellent mental powers; but who, as he grew older, did not develop the easy, graceful bearing which his father so much desired for him and which is always an important adjunct to a successful career as an envoy to foreign governments where great address and tact are required to adjust delicate international questions. The father early set before the son, in its two branches, learning and deportment, the education he wished him to gain and, under the circumstances, he can hardly be blamed if he harps continually on his second string which he playfully calls "the Graces." He writes, "The Graces! The Graces! Remember the Graces! I would have you sacrifice to the Graces!" His son lacked fine manners and when in time that fact became undeniably apparent, he directs the larger part of his attention to the subject. It is for that reason that cultivation of manners seems to be dwelt upon with undue emphasis.

The immorality complained of in the letters is not so much the fault of Lord Chesterfield as it is the fault of the age in which he lived. While instinctively he shrinks from the coarse pleasures of the times, he yet became a victim to several, such as gambling, because he thought such indulgences essential to the character of a fine gentleman. It was his misfortune to value too highly the standards of the fashionable world of which he was a member, — standards opposed to the natural promptings of his own better nature. Coarseness and vulgarity, whether in dress, deportment, or language, was naturally abhorrent to him. Everything, therefore, which he has to say to his son upon mental training and good manners is still excellent counsel for any young person, while the charming style, in which the thoughts are expressed, makes them a model of easy, graceful English prose.

As a representative of the eighteenth century, it is not fair to judge Lord Chesterfield apart from his age. But in this short review there is not space enough to do more than suggest a few of the evils which then existed, to show what the spirit of the times was.

The singular indifference to human suffering is seen in the severity of the laws. There were more than two hundred crimes on the Statute Books which were punishable by death. Upon Temple Bar, the quaint old archway which marked the dividing line between the busy street, called The Strand, and Fleet Street, in the heart of London, was, usually, a ghastly row of heads exposed to view as a warning to offenders. The streets of the city, the high roads of the country were infested with robbers. The prisons were full of criminals and that still

more unfortunate class, the poor debtors. That strange phase of depravity, known as the "Fleet Marriages," trifled with that sacred rite. The poor people were more crowded and miserable in their wretched quarters than to-day and through their midst stalked the appalling specter, the smallpox, which invaded the homes of the rich almost as often as it did those of the poor.

In the country, the condition of affairs was not much better. It was before the great era of steam and none of the large manufacturing towns yet existed which could absorb and employ the rural population. Nor were the agricultural industries of the country sufficiently productive for their needs. The rude and crowded masses of the coal mining districts were in a still more pitiable condition. The manufacture and sale of gin, which had become one of the most important industries of the country since it was introduced from Holland under William and Mary, still further increased the wide-spread misery.

Turning from the people in general to the more favored classes, life offers subjects for contemplation that are not more pleasing. The letters of distinguished people such as Chesterfield, Walpole and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the novels and the drama, all reflect the frivolity,[1] the selfishness, the hardness, and the coarseness (to which allusion has already been made) of a superficial age.

During this period, indifferent as it seemed toward human needs, great forces were already declaring themselves which were soon to ameliorate the condition of the

[1] Just as the average daily paper caters to the vulgarity of our own age.

people; and none of them was more remarkable than the great religious movement under the Wesleys and Whitefield. Little as some may be inclined to sympathize with the methods of these indefatigable workers, it would be almost impossible to over-estimate the good they accomplished in uplifting the degraded masses of the smaller towns and rural districts of England.

Lord Chesterfield listened to the dramatic eloquence of the great preacher, Whitefield, on one occasion at least, and was profoundly impressed with his great gifts; but there is no evidence that he took any practical interest in this or any other purely humanitarian movement of the day.

His life was very much like that of other men of his rank and condition. His mother died in his infancy, while his father, a fashionable nonentity of the day who seemed to entertain no affection for the son, perhaps because he was incapable of any such sentiment, left him to grow up in the house of his maternal grandmother, the Marchioness of Halifax. Here he met distinguished company and early developed an aptitude for study. In due time he spent two years in Cambridge at Trinity College where he seems to have covered a wide field of reading. His method of studying Greek would delight a modern student. He writes of this subject, — "I read Lucian and Xenophon in Greek which is made easy to me; for I do not take pains to learn the grammatical rules; but the gentleman who is with me, and who is a living grammar, teaches me them as I go along."

From Cambridge he went on to the continent and spent two years traveling about alone instead of with the conventional tutor. A good part of the time, he spent at The

Hague and in Paris where he acquired that admiration for French life and manners which he never ceased to entertain. His rank gave him the entrance into court life of the French capital. It was the corrupt and polished court of the weak and vicious Louis XV., a dangerous school in which to train ambitious youth.

He was recalled to England by the death of Queen Anne and took an active part in placing the German prince George of Hanover on the throne as King George the First of England. It was about this time, he was made a member of the House of Commons. Shortly after his admission, he made an eloquent speech on some question before the house, but learned, to his chagrin, that he had made himself liable to a fine of £500[1] ($2,500) for speaking before he was of age. Indignant with himself, he hastened again to the continent and spent the time of waiting for his majority in Paris and The Hague where, it is said, he made himself useful as an informer to the home government about the Jacobites who were continually plotting in those cities to restore the banished house of Stewart to the English throne.

On his return he held several posts of honor and importance under the king and made himself famous as an orator. Walpole said, — "That the finest speech he had ever listened to was one from Lord Chesterfield." In the dishonorable quarrels that arose between George I. and his son, afterwards George II.; and in turn, between George II. and his heir, Chesterfield was in each case opposed to the sovereign. His fortunes suffered to some extent from these politico-domestic complications, yet he succeeded

[1] £500 equivalent to much more than $2,500 then.

in obtaining some of the high honors he coveted. He was twice made Ambassador to The Hague, where he performed his important missions with great skill; and he was, for a short term of office, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

His administration of Irish affairs was the most brilliant, the most successful effort of his life. Lord Mahon, his biographer, says he is assured that his name lives in the honored remembrance of the Irish people as perhaps next to Ormond, the best and worthiest in their long viceregal line. He held the post four years. The last public office which he filled was that of Secretary of State. But owing to his differences with the king, his freedom and usefulness were hampered so much that he was glad to retire from active life in 1748, after holding the position two years. He continued, however, for some years to appear in the House of Lords to which body he had been raised by the death of his father in 1726, and to which he had given the celebrated sobriquet, the "Hospital for Incurables." He would have much preferred to remain in the more active and more able House of Commons, could he have done so.

In these latter years in the House, he rendered an important service to the country, in his strenuous efforts to have the calendar corrected. All the other countries of Western Europe had accepted the Gregorian calendar except England; which calendar advanced the date of the month, eleven days. This difference of time caused great inconvenience to the foreign commerce of the country, but still the people were very reluctant to accept the innovation. It was chiefly through Lord Chesterfield's efforts, that the desirable change was brought about.

Now, in accordance with what was called for convenience the new style of reckoning or simply "N. S.," Washington's birthday falls on the 22d of February, instead of the 11th, according to the old style or "O. S." And the great Columbian celebrations are held or would naturally be held on the 23d of October, instead of on the 12th of October, which the histories give for the date of the discovery of America. The four hundredth anniversary falling upon Sunday, it has been agreed to hold the celebrations on Friday, the 21st, as a more convenient time than either the Saturday preceding or the Monday succeeding that date.

Lord Chesterfield continued to withdraw more and more from the world as deafness and other infirmities increased upon him. His career had been brilliant, but hardly satisfying to his ambition. For every triumph he suffered a defeat and he was constantly checkmated by his tendency to take the opposition; while his literary cleverness, both in speech and with his pen, betrayed him into indiscretions for which he often paid the penalty, by the loss of advancement. It is probable, too, that he sometimes failed where a more honest or certainly a more straightforward policy would have succeeded. He had studied too long the French school of statesmanship to believe in any other system than the one of intrigue and deception which had so long prevailed at the French Court.

His literary remains form a substantial collection, but their highly elaborated style is wearisome. They consist, principally, of speeches which he prepared for various occasions; and, though they then awakened loud applause, they are pretty much forgotten now.

He might have won distinction for himself as a patron of letters and literary men (an important office in that century), had he extended a friendly hand to haughty old Samuel Johnson struggling along with his afterwards famous dictionary. He ignored the literary man seeking assistance in his cold anti-chamber. Dr. Johnson waited in vain for a word of encouragement and afterwards avenged himself in effective satire. The well-known line in his poem, "The Vanity of Human Wishes,"

"Toil, envy, want, *the patron* or the jail."

was no doubt suggested by the recollection of those hours lost in his lordship's waiting room.

His only claim to literary fame rests now upon the letters to his son of which enough has been said. In his son he hoped to see realized all the ambitious dreams in which he felt himself disappointed. But the young man never showed either the address or the ability of his father. Falling early into ill-health, he appeared but little in the world and then to small advantage. If Lord Chesterfield felt regret at this, he did not say so. He had done his best to shape an ideal character according to his standard and if he failed, it was not his first experience of failure. He bore this disappointment as he took all the other events of his life, with, apparently, unruffled serenity.

The last twenty years of his life passed quietly. His extreme deafness cut him off from much social enjoyment, as well as from his public life. Reading and study became again his solace and delight as they had been in his younger days. Correspondence with distinguished

men, as well as with his beloved son, occupied his leisure moments. In his earlier years he had been the friend and patron of the brilliant French writer, Voltaire, whom he helped to make famous. Now both men, grown feeble and weary of "this silly" world which, with all its bountiful gifts to them, they found unsatisfying, wrote to each other, long letters; the one from his retirement in Switzerland, the other in England.

To Lord Chesterfield, are attributed many phrases and epigrams that have become familiar in our English speech. "Whatever is worth doing at all, is worth doing well," — "Take care of the pence, for the pounds will take care of themselves," — "Style is the dress of thoughts," — "Despatch is the soul of business," — "A chapter of accidents," were of his authorship.

He died, as has been said, in the year 1773 when George III., who exercised so momentous an influence upon American affairs by rousing the English colonists to rebellion and separation, had been seated thirteen years upon the throne. It is pleasant to learn that in this great struggle between the countries, Lord Chesterfield's sympathy was on the side of the Americans. His influence was exercised in favor of the repeal of the Stamp Act which the English colonists in America found so oppressive. In a letter to his son dated December 27, 1765, he said, in reference to the forcible collection of the duty, — "I would not have the mother-country become a stepmother." The more liberal policy advocated by the statesmen of broader views than those held by the headstrong king and his favorite advisers was overborne by the rash monarch, but not without many spirited protests

from his opponents. Chesterfield did not live to see the final result of the long series of heated Parliamentary debates on the right of England to tax her colonies without allowing them a representative in the legislative body. He had been dead three years, when the "embattled farmers stood" on Concord bridge and fired the famous shot heard round the world. His sympathy, had he lived, would have still been with the brave men who dared resist tyranny and wrong. His influence throughout his life had been thrown on the liberal and progressive side of the great public questions of the times.

M. F. WHEATON.

Boston, October 20, 1892.

LORD CHESTERFIELD'S LETTERS.

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LETTER I.

DEAR BOY, Tunbridge, July the 15th, 1739.

I THANK you for your concern about my health; which I would have given you an account of sooner, but that writing does not agree with these waters. I am better since I have been here; and shall therefore stay a month longer.

Signor Zamboni compliments me, through you, much more than I deserve; but pray do you take care to deserve what he says of you; and remember, that praise, when it is not deserved, is the severest satire and abuse; and the most effectual way of exposing people's vices and follies. This is a figure of speech called Irony; which is saying directly the contrary of what you mean; but yet it is not a lie, because you plainly show, that you mean directly the contrary of what you say; so that you deceive nobody. For example: if one were to compliment a notorious knave for his singular honesty and probity, and an eminent fool for his wit and parts, the irony is plain, and everybody would discover the satire. Or, suppose that I were to commend you for your great attention to your book, and for your retaining and remembering what you have once learned; would not you plainly perceive the irony, and see that I laughed at you? Therefore, whenever you are

commended for anything, consider fairly, with yourself, whether you deserve it or not; and if you do not deserve it, remember that you are only abused and laughed at; and endeavor to deserve better for the future, and to prevent the irony. Adieu.

LETTER II.

DEAR BOY, November the 20th, 1739.

AS you are now reading the Roman History, I hope you do it with that care and attention which it deserves. The utility of History consists principally in the examples it gives us of the virtues and vices of those who have gone before us: upon which we ought to make the proper observations. History animates and excites us to the love and the practice of virtue; by showing us the regard and veneration that was always paid to great and virtuous men, in the times in which they lived, and the praise and glory with which their names are perpetuated, and transmitted down to our times. The Roman History furnishes more examples of virtue and magnanimity, or greatness of mind, than any other. It was a common thing to see their Consuls and Dictators (who, you know, were their chief Magistrates) taken from the plough, to lead their armies against their enemies; and, after victory, returning to their plough again, and passing the rest of their lives in modest retirement: a retirement more glorious, if possible, than the victories that preceded it! Many of their greatest men died so poor, that they were buried at the expense of the public. Curius, who had no money of his own, refused a great sum that the Samnites offered, saying, that he saw

no glory in having money himself, but in commanding those that had. And Fabricius, who had often commanded the Roman armies, and as often triumphed over their enemies, was found by his fireside, eating those roots and herbs which he had planted and cultivated himself in his own field. Scipio, after a victory he had obtained in Spain, found among the prisoners a young princess of extreme beauty, who, he was informed, was soon to have been married to a man of quality of that country. He ordered her to be entertained and attended with the same care and respect, as if she had been in her father's house; and, as soon as he could find her lover, he gave her to him, and added to her portion the money that her father had brought for her ransom. This was a most glorious example of moderation, continence, and generosity, which gained him the hearts of all the people of Spain.

Such are the rewards that always crown virtue; and such the characters that you should imitate, if you would be a great and a good man, which is the only way to be a happy one! Adieu.

LETTER III.

DEAR BOY,

I SEND you here a few more Latin roots, though I am not sure that you will like my roots so well as those that grow in your garden; however, if you will attend to them, they may save you a great deal of trouble. These few will naturally point out many others to your own observation; and enable you, by comparison, to find out most derived and compound words, when once you know the

original root of them. You are old enough now to make observations upon what you learn; which, if you would be pleased to do, you cannot imagine how much time and trouble it would save you. Remember, you are now very near nine years old; an age at which all boys ought to know a great deal, but you, particularly, a great deal more, considering the care and pains that have been employed about you; and if you do not answer those expectations, you will lose your character; which is the most mortifying thing that can happen to a generous mind. Everybody has ambition, of some kind or other, and is vexed when that ambition is disappointed: the difference is, that the ambition of silly people is a silly and mistaken ambition; and the ambition of people of sense is a right and commendable one. For instance; the ambition of a silly boy, of your age, would be to have fine clothes, and money to throw away in idle follies; which, you plainly see, would be no proofs of merit in him, but only of folly in his parents, in dressing him out like a jackanapes, and giving him money to play the fool with. Whereas a boy of good sense places his ambition in excelling other boys of his own age, and even older, in virtue and knowledge. His glory is in being known always to speak the truth, in showing good-nature and compassion, in learning quicker, and applying himself more than other boys. These are real proofs of merit in him, and consequently proper objects of ambition; and will acquire him a solid reputation and character. This holds true in men, as well as in boys: the ambition of a silly fellow will be, to have a fine equipage, a fine house, and fine clothes; things which anybody, that has as much money, may have as well as he;

for they are all to be bought: but the ambition of a man of sense and honor is, to be distinguished by a character and reputation of knowledge, truth, and virtue; things which are not to be bought, and that can only be acquired by a good head and a good heart. Such was the ambition of the Lacedæmonians and the Romans, when they made the greatest figure; and such, I hope, yours will always be. Adieu.

LETTER IV.

DEAR BOY, Wednesday.

YOU behaved yourself so well at Mr. Boden's, last Sunday, that you justly deserve commendation: besides, you encourage me to give you some rules of politeness and good breeding, being persuaded that you will observe them. Know, then, that as learning, honor, and virtue are absolutely necessary to gain you the esteem and admiration of mankind; politeness and good breeding are equally necessary to make you welcome and agreeable in conversation and common life. Great talents, such as honor, virtue, learning, and parts, are above the generality of the world, who neither possess them themselves, nor judge of them rightly in others: but all people are judges of the lesser talents, such as civility, affability, and an obliging, agreeable address and manner; because they feel the good effects of them, as making society easy and pleasing. Good sense must, in many cases, determine good breeding; because the same thing that would be civil at one time, and to one person, may be quite otherwise at another time, and to another person; but there are some general rules of good

breeding, that hold always true, and in all cases. As, for example, it is always extremely rude to answer only Yes, or No, to anybody, without adding, Sir, my Lord, or Madam, according to the quality of the person you speak to; as, in French, you must always say, *Monsieur*, *Milord*, *Madame*, and *Mademoiselle*. I suppose you know that every married woman is, in French, *Madame*, and every unmarried one is *Mademoiselle*. It is likewise extremely rude not to give the proper attention, and a civil answer, when people speak to you; or to go away, or be doing something else, while they are speaking to you; for that convinces them that you despise them, and do not think it worth your while to hear or answer what they say. I dare say I need not tell you how rude it is to take the best place in a room, or to seize immediately upon what you like at table, without offering first to help others, as if you considered nobody but yourself. On the contrary, you should always endeavor to procure all the conveniences you can to the people you are with. Besides being civil, which is absolutely necessary, the perfection of good breeding is, to be civil with ease, and in a gentlemanlike manner. For this, you should observe the French people, who excel in it, and whose politeness seems as easy and natural as any other part of their conversation. Whereas the English are often awkward in their civilities, and, when they mean to be civil, are too much ashamed to get it out. But, pray, do you remember never to be ashamed of doing what is right: you would have a great deal of reason to be ashamed if you were not civil; but what reason can you have to be ashamed of being civil? And why not say a civil and an obliging thing as easily and as naturally as

you would ask what o'clock it is? This kind of bashfulness, justly called false modesty, is the distinguishing character of an English booby; who is frightened out of his wits, when people of fashion speak to him; and when he is to answer them, blushes, stammers, can hardly get out what he would say, and becomes really ridiculous, from a groundless fear of being laughed at: whereas a really well-bred man would speak to all the Kings in the world, with as little concern, and as much ease, as he would speak to you. Adieu.

LETTER V.

DEAR BOY, Spa, the 25th July, 1741.

I HAVE often told you in my former letters (and it is most certainly true) that the strictest and most scrupulous honor and virtue can alone make you esteemed and valued by mankind; that parts and learning can alone make you admired and celebrated by them; but that the possession of lesser talents was most absolutely necessary towards making you liked, beloved, and sought after in private life. Of these lesser talents, good breeding is the principal and most necessary one, not only as it is very important in itself, but as it adds great lustre to the more solid advantages both of the heart and the mind. I have often touched upon good breeding to you before, so that this letter shall be upon the next necessary qualification to it, which is a genteel, easy manner and carriage, wholly free from those odd tricks, ill habits, and awkwardnesses which even many very worthy and sensible people have in their behavior. However trifling a genteel manner may sound,

it is of very great consequence towards pleasing in private life, especially the women, which, one time or other, you will think worth pleasing; and I have known many a man, from his awkwardness, give people such a dislike of him at first, that all his merit could not get the better of it afterwards. Whereas a genteel manner prepossesses people in your favor, bends them towards you, and makes them wish to like you. Awkwardness can proceed but from two causes — either from not having kept good company, or from not having attended to it. As for your keeping good company, I will take care of that; do you take care to observe their ways and manners, and to form your own upon them. Attention is absolutely necessary for this, as indeed it is for everything else, and a man without attention is not fit to live in the world. When an awkward fellow first comes into a room, it is highly probable that his sword gets between his legs and throws him down, or makes him stumble, at least. When he has recovered this accident, he goes and places himself in the very place of the whole room where he should not; there he soon lets his hat fall down, and in taking it up again, throws down his cane; in recovering his cane, his hat falls a second time; so that he is a quarter of an hour before he is in order again. If he drinks tea or coffee he certainly scalds his mouth, and lets either the cup or the saucer fall, and spills the tea or coffee in his breeches. At dinner his awkwardness distinguishes itself particularly, as he has more to do: there he holds his knife, fork, and spoon differently from other people; eats with his knife to the great danger of his mouth; picks his teeth with his fork, and puts his spoon, which has been in his throat twenty times,

into the dishes again. If he is to carve, he can never hit the joint, but, in his vain efforts to cut through the bone, scatters the sauce in everybody's face. He generally daubs himself with soup and grease, though his napkin is commonly stuck through a buttonhole and tickles his chin.

There is, likewise, an awkwardness of expression and words, most carefully to be avoided; such as false English, bad pronunciation, old sayings, and common proverbs; which are so many proofs of having kept bad and low company. For example: if, instead of saying that tastes are different, and that every man has his own peculiar one, you should let off a proverb, and say, "That what is one man's meat is another man's poison"; or else, "Every one as they like, as the good man said when he kissed his cow"; everybody would be persuaded that you had never kept company with anybody above footmen and housemaids.

Attention will do all this; and without attention nothing is to be done: want of attention, which is really want of thought, is either folly or madness. You should not only have attention to everything, but a quickness of attention, so as to observe, at once, all the people in the room, their motions, their looks, and their words, and yet without staring at them, and seeming to be an observer. This quick and unobserved observation is of infinite advantage in life, and is to be acquired with care; and, on the contrary, what is called absence, which is a thoughtlessness, and want of attention about what is doing, makes a man so like either a fool or a madman, that for my part I see no real difference. A fool never has thought; a madman has lost it; and an absent man is, for the time, without it. Adieu.

LETTER VI.

DEAR BOY, Spa, August the 6th, 1741.

I AM glad you have begun to compose a little; it will give you a habit of thinking upon subjects, which is at least as necessary as reading them.

Let me know whether you think that a man is born only for his own pleasure and advantage, or whether he is not obliged to contribute to the good of the society in which he lives, and of all mankind in general. This is certain, that every man receives advantages from society, which he could not have, if he were the only man in the world: therefore, is he not in some measure in debt to society? and is he not obliged to do for others what they do for him? You may do this in English or Latin, which you please; for it is the thinking part, and not the language, that I mind in this case.

I warned you, in my last, against those disagreeable tricks and awkwardnesses, which many people contract when they are young, by the negligence of their parents, and cannot get quit of them when they are old; such as odd motions, strange postures, and ungenteel carriage. But there is likewise an awkwardness of the mind, that ought to be, and with care may be, avoided: as, for instance, to mistake or forget names; to speak of Mr. What-d'ye-call-him, or Mrs. Thingum, or How-d'ye-call-her, is excessively awkward and ordinary. To call people by improper titles and appellations is so, too. To begin a story or narration, when you are not perfect in it, and

cannot go through with it, but are forced, possibly, to say in the middle of it, "I have forgot the rest," is very unpleasant and bungling. One must be extremely exact, clear, and perspicuous in everything one says, otherwise, instead of entertaining or informing others, one only tires and puzzles them. The voice and manner of speaking, too, are not to be neglected: some people almost shut their mouths when they speak, and mutter so that they are not to be understood; others speak so fast, and sputter, that they are not to be understood neither; some always speak as loud as if they were talking to deaf people; and others so low that one cannot hear them. All these habits are awkward and disagreeable, and are to be avoided by attention: they are the distinguishing marks of the ordinary people, who have had no care taken of their education.

LETTER VII.

SIR, Saturday.

IT is good breeding alone that can prepossess people in your favour at first sight: more time being necessary to discover greater talents. This good breeding, you know, does not consist in low bows and formal ceremony; but in an easy, civil, and respectful behaviour. You will therefore take care to answer with complaisance, when you are spoken to; to place yourself at the lower end of the table, unless bid to go higher; not to eat awkwardly or dirtily; not to sit when others stand: and to do all this with an air of complaisance, and not with a grave, sour look, as if you did it all unwillingly. I do not mean

a silly, insipid smile, that fools have when they would be civil; but an air of sensible good humor. I hardly know anything so difficult to attain, or so necessary to possess, as perfect good breeding, which is equally inconsistent with a stiff formality, an impertinent forwardness, and an awkward bashfulness. A little ceremony is often necessary; a certain degree of firmness is absolutely so; and an outward modesty is extremely becoming: the knowledge of the world, and your own observations, must, and alone can, tell you the proper quantities of each. Adieu.

LETTER VIII.

DEAR BOY, Dublin Castle, November the 19th, 1745.

I HAVE received your last Saturday's performance, with which I am very well satisfied.

Dancing is in itself a very trifling, silly thing; but it is one of those established follies to which people of sense are sometimes obliged to conform; and then they should be able to do it well. And, though I would not have you a dancer, yet, when you do dance, I would have you dance well, as I would have you do everything you do well. There is no one thing so trifling, but which (if it is to be done at all) ought to be done well. And I have often told you, that I wished you even played at pitch, and cricket, better than any boy at Westminster. For instance; dress is a very foolish thing; and yet it is a very foolish thing for a man not to be well dressed, according to his rank and way of life; and it is so far from being a disparagement to any man's understanding, that it

is rather a proof of it, to be as well dressed as those whom he lives with: the difference in this case, between a man of sense and a fop, is, that the fop values himself upon his dress; and the man of sense laughs at it, at the same time that he knows he must not neglect it. There are a thousand foolish customs of this kind, which not being criminal must be complied with, and even cheerfully, by men of sense. Diogenes the Cynic was a wise man for despising them; but a fool for showing it. Be wiser than other people, if you can; but do not tell them so. Good-night.

LETTER IX.

DEAR BOY, Bath, October the 4th, 1746.

THOUGH I employ so much of my time in writing to you, I confess I have often my doubts whether it is to any purpose. I know how unwelcome advice generally is; I know that those who want it most like it and follow it least; and I know, too, that the advice of parents, more particularly, is ascribed to the moroseness, the imperiousness, or the garrulity of old age. I flatter myself that, your own reason, young as it is, must tell you that I can have no interest but yours in the advice I give you; and that, consequently, you will at least weigh and consider it well: in which case, some of it will, I hope, have its effect. Do not think that I mean to dictate as a parent; I only mean to advise as a friend, and an indulgent one too: and do not apprehend that I mean to check your pleasures; of which, on the contrary, I only desire to be

Garrulity: talkativeness.

the guide, not the censor. Let my experience supply your want of it, and clear your way in the progress of your youth of those thorns and briers which scratched and disfigured me in the course of mine.

I have so often recommended to you attention and application to whatever you learn, that I do not mention them now as duties, but I point them out to you as conducive, nay, absolutely necessary, to your pleasures; for can there be a greater pleasure than to be universally allowed to excel those of one's own age and manner of life? And, consequently, can there be anything more mortifying than to be excelled by them? I do not confine the application which I recommend, singly to the view and emulation of excelling others (though that is a very sensible pleasure and a very warrantable pride); but I mean likewise to excel in the thing itself: for, in my mind, one may as well not know a thing at all, as know it but imperfectly. To know a little of anything, gives neither satisfaction nor credit, but often brings disgrace or ridicule.

Mr. Pope says, very truly,

> "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing;
> Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring."

And what is called a *smattering* of everything infallibly constitutes a coxcomb. I have often, of late, reflected what an unhappy man I must now have been, if I had not acquired in my youth some fund and taste of learning. What could I have done with myself, at this age, without

Pierian: Relating to the muses; called Pierides, from Pieria near Mt. Olympus, where they worshipped.

them? My books, and only my books, are now left me; and I daily find what Cicero says of learning to be true: "These studies," says he, "nourish our youth, delight our age, adorn our good fortune, offer refuge and solace in adversity; delight us at home, are not a hindrance abroad; pass the night with us, travel with us, go into the country with us."

I do not mean, by this, to exclude conversation out of the pleasures of an advanced age; on the contrary, it is a very great and a very rational pleasure, at all ages; but the conversation of the ignorant is no conversation, and gives even them no pleasure: they tire of their own sterility, and have not matter enough to furnish them with words to keep up a conversation.

Let me, therefore, most earnestly recommend to you to hoard up, while you can, a great stock of knowledge; for though, during the dissipation of your youth, you may not have occasion to spend much of it, yet you may depend upon it that a time will come, when you will want it to maintain you. Public granaries are filled in plentiful years; not that it is known that the next, or the second, or third year will prove a scarce one, but because it is known that sooner or later such a year will come, in which the grain will be wanted.

Do not imagine that the knowledge, which I so much recommend to you, is confined to books, pleasing, useful, and necessary as that knowledge is: but I comprehend in it the great knowledge of the world, still more necessary than that of books. In truth, they assist one another reciprocally; and no man will have either perfectly, who has not both. The knowledge of the world is only to be

acquired in the world, and not in a closet. Books alone will never teach it you; but they will suggest many things to your observation, which might otherwise escape you; and your own observations upon mankind, when compared with those which you will find in books, will help you to fix the true point.

To know mankind well requires full as much attention and application as to know books, and, it may be, more sagacity and discernment. I am, at this time, acquainted with many elderly people, who have all passed their whole lives in the great world, but with such levity and inattention, that they know no more of it now than they did at fifteen. Do not flatter yourself, therefore, with the thoughts that you can acquire this knowledge in the frivolous chit-chat of idle companies: no, you must go much deeper than that. You must look into people, as well as at them. Almost all people are born with all the passions, to a certain degree; but almost every man has a prevailing one, to which the others are subordinate. Search every one for that ruling passion; pry into the recesses of his heart, and observe the different workings of the same passion in different people. And, when you have found out the prevailing passion of any man, remember never to trust him, where that passion is concerned. Be upon your guard yourself against it, whatever professions he may make you.

I would desire you to read this letter twice over. Adieu.

CHESTERFIELD.

LETTER X.

DEAR BOY, Bath, October the 9th, 1746.

YOUR distresses in your journey from Heidelberg to Schaffhausen, your lying upon straw, your black bread, and your broken *Berline*, are proper seasonings for the greater fatigues and distresses, which you must expect in the course of your travels; and, if one had a mind to moralize, one might call them the samples of the accidents, rubs, and difficulties, which every man meets with in his journey through life. In this journey, the understanding is the vehicle that must carry you through; and in proportion as that is stronger or weaker, more or less in repair, your journey will be better or worse; though, at best, you will now and then find some bad roads, and some bad inns. Take care, therefore, to keep that necessary vehicle in perfect good repair; examine, improve and strengthen it every day: it is in the power, and ought to be the care, of every man to do it; he that neglects it deserves to feel, and certainly will feel, the fatal effects of that negligence.

But a young man should be ambitious to shine and excel; alert, active, and indefatigable in the means of doing it; and, like Cæsar, "Reckoning nothing done, if anything remains that ought to be done." You seem to want that vital energy of soul which spurs and excites most young men to please, to shine, to excel. Without the desire and the pains necessary to be considerable,

depend upon it that you never can be so; as, without the desire and attention necessary to please, you never can please. "A diety is not wanting if there be prudence," is unquestionably true with regard to everything except poetry; and I am very sure that any man of common understanding may, by proper culture, care, attention, and labor, make himself whatever he pleases except a good poet. Ancient and Modern History are, by attention, easily attainable. Geography and Chronology the same; none of them requiring any uncommon share of genius or invention. Speaking and writing clearly, correctly, and with ease and grace, are certainly to be acquired by reading the best authors with care, and by attention to the best living models.

If care and application are necessary to the acquiring of those qualifications, without which you can never be considerable nor make a figure in the world, they are not less necessary with regard to the lesser accomplishments, which are requisite to make you agreeable and pleasing in society. In truth, whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well, and nothing can be done well without attention: I therefore carry the necessity of attention down to the lowest things, even to dancing and dress. Custom has made dancing sometimes necessary for a young man; therefore mind it while you learn it, that you may learn to do it well, and not be ridiculous, though in a ridiculous act. Dress is of the same nature; you must dress, therefore attend to it; not in order to rival or to excel a fop in it, but in order to avoid singularity, and consequently ridicule. Take great care always to be dressed like the reasonable people of your own age, in the place where you

are, whose dress is never spoken of one way or another, as either too negligent or too much studied.

What is commonly called an absent man, is commonly either a very weak or a very affected man; but be he which he will, he is, I am sure, a very disagreeable man in company. He fails in all the common offices of civility; he seems not to know those people to-day with whom yesterday he appeared to live in intimacy. He takes no part in the general conversation; but, on the contrary, breaks into it from time to time with some start of his own, as if he waked from a dream. This (as I said before) is a sure indication either of a mind so weak that it is not able to bear above one object at a time; or so affected, that it would be supposed to be wholly engrossed by, and directed to, some very great and important objects. Sir Isaac Newton, Mr. Locke, and (it may be) five or six more, since the creation of the world, may have had a right to absence, from that intense thought which the things they were investigating required. But if a young man, and a man of the world, who has no such avocations to plead, will claim and exercise that right of absence in company, his pretended right should, in my mind, be turned into an involuntary absence, by his perpetual exclusion from company. Adieu.

LETTER XI.

DEAR BOY, London, March the 27th, 1747.

PLEASURE is the rock which most young people split upon; they launch out with crowded sails in quest of it, but without a compass to direct their course, or reason

sufficient to steer the vessel; for want of which, pain and shame, instead of Pleasure, are the returns of their voyage. Do not think that I mean to snarl at Pleasure, like a Stoic, or to preach against it, like a Parson; no, I mean to point it out, and recommend it to you, like an Epicurean: I wish you a great deal, and my only view is to hinder you from mistaking it.

As it may be of use to you, I am not unwilling, though at the same time ashamed, to own that the vices of my youth proceeded much more from my silly resolution of being what I heard called a Man of Pleasure, than from my own inclinations. I always naturally hated drinking; and yet I have often drunk, with disgust at the time, attended by great sickness the next day, only because I then considered drinking as a necessary qualification for a fine gentleman and a Man of Pleasure.

The same as to gaming. I did not want money, and consequently had no occasion to play for it; but I thought Play another necessary ingredient in the composition of a Man of Pleasure, and accordingly I plunged into it without desire, at first; sacrificed a thousand real pleasures to it; and made myself solidly uneasy by it, for thirty of the best years of my life.

I was even absurd enough, for a little while, to swear, by way of adorning and completing the shining character which I affected; but this folly I soon laid aside upon finding both the guilt and the indecency of it.

Stoic: one teaching that a wise man should be unmoved by passions like joy or grief.

Epicurus: a Greek philosopher who taught that life should be devoted to pleasure.

Thus seduced by fashion, and blindly adopting nominal pleasures, I lost real ones; and my fortune impaired, and my constitution shattered, are, I must confess, the just punishment of my errors.

Take warning, then, by them; choose your pleasures for yourself, and do not let them be imposed upon you. Follow nature, and not fashion; weigh the present enjoyment of your pleasures against the necessary consequences of them, and then let your own common sense determine your choice.

Were I to begin the world again, with the experience which I now have of it, I would lead a life of real, not of imaginary pleasure. I would be most firmly resolved not to destroy my own faculties and constitution in complaisance to those who have no regard to their own. I would play to give me pleasure, but not to give me pain.

I would pass some of my time in reading, and the rest in the company of people of sense and learning, and chiefly those above me: and I would frequent the mixed companies of men and women of fashion, which though often frivolous, yet they unbend and refresh the mind, not uselessly, because they certainly polish and soften the manners.

These would be my pleasures and amusements, if I were to live the last thirty years over again; they are rational ones; and moreover I will tell you, they are really the fashionable ones: for the others are not, in truth, the pleasures of what I call people of fashion, but of those who only call themselves so. Does good company care to have a man reeling drunk among them? Or to see another tearing his hair, and blaspheming, for

having lost, at play, more than he is able to pay? No; those who practice, and much more those who brag of them, make no part of good company; and are most unwillingly, if ever, admitted into it. A real man of fashion and pleasure observes decency; at least, neither borrows nor affects vices.

I have not mentioned the pleasures of the mind (which are the solid and permanent ones) because they do not come under the head of what people commonly call pleasures, which they seem to confine to the senses. The pleasure of virtue, of charity, and of learning is true and lasting pleasure; which I hope you will be well and long acquainted with. Adieu.

LETTER XII.

DEAR BOY, London, April the 3rd, 1747.

THE natural partiality of every author for his own works, makes me very glad to hear that Mr. Harte has thought this last edition of mine worth so fine a binding; and as he has bound it in red and gilt it upon the back, I hope he will take care that it shall be *lettered* too. A showy binding attracts the eyes, and engages the attention of everybody; but with this difference, that women, and men of sense and learning immediately examine the inside; and if they find that it does not answer the finery on the outside, they throw it by with the greater indignation and contempt. I hope that when this edition of my works shall be opened and read, the best judges will find connection, consistency, solidity, and spirit in it.

Mr. Harte may revise and emend as much as he pleases, but it will be to little purpose if you do not coöperate with him. The work will be imperfect.

I like your account of the salt works; which shows that you gave some attention while you were seeing them. But, notwithstanding that, by your account, the Swiss salt is (I dare say) very good, yet I am apt to suspect that it falls a little short of the true Attic salt, in which there was a peculiar quickness and delicacy. That same Attic salt seasoned almost all Greece, except Bœotia; and a great deal of it was exported afterwards to Rome, where it was counterfeited by a composition called Urbanity, which after some time was brought to very near the perfection of the original Attic salt. The more you are powdered with these two kinds of salt, the better you will keep, and the more you will be relished.

Adieu! My compliments to Mr. Harte and Mr. Eliot.

LETTER XIII.

DEAR BOY, London, April the 14th, 1747.

YOU may remember, that I have always earnestly recommended to you, to do what you are about, be that what it will; and to do nothing else at the same time. Do not imagine that I mean by this, that you should attend to, and plod at, your book all day long; far from it: I mean that you should have your pleasures too; and that you should attend to them, for the time, as much as to your studies; and if you do not attend equally to both,

Attica: a district in Greece of which Athens was the capital and the center of learning

you will neither have improvement nor satisfaction from either. A man is fit for neither business nor pleasure who either cannot, or does not, command and direct his attention to the present object, and in some degree banish, for that time, all other objects from his thoughts. If at a ball, a supper, or a party of pleasure, a man were to be solving, in his own mind, a problem in Euclid, he would be a very bad companion, and make a very poor figure in that company; or if, in studying a problem in his closet, he were to think of a minuet, I am apt to believe that he would make a very poor mathematician. There is time enough for everything, in the course of the day, if you do but one thing at once; but there is not time enough in the year, if you will do two things at a time. The Pensionary [1] de Witt, who was torn to pieces in the year 1672, did the whole business of the Republic, and yet had time left to go to assemblies in the evening, and sup in company. Being asked how he could possibly find time to go through so much business, and yet amuse himself in the evenings as he did, he answered, "There was nothing so easy; for that it was only doing one thing at a time, and never putting off anything till to-morrow that could be done to-day." This steady and undissipated attention to one object is a sure mark of a superior genius; as hurry, bustle, and agitation, are the never-failing symptoms of a weak and frivolous mind. When you read Horace, attend to the justness of his thoughts, the happiness of his diction, and the beauty of his poetry.

There is a little book which you read here with Monsieur Coderc, entitled, The Art of Right Thinking, written by

[1] Prime Minister of Holland.

Père Bouhours. I wish you would read this book again, at your leisure hours; for it will not only divert you, but likewise form your taste, and give you a just manner of thinking. Adieu!

LETTER XIV.

DEAR BOY, London, June the 30th, 1747.

THOUGH I do not desire that you should immediately turn author, and oblige the world with your travels; yet, wherever you go, I would have you as curious and inquisitive as if you did intend to write them. I do not mean that you should give yourself so much trouble, to know the number of houses, inhabitants, signposts, and tombstones of every town that you go through; but that you should inform yourself, as well as your stay will permit you, whether the town is free, or whom it belongs to, or in what manner; whether it has any peculiar privileges or customs; what trade or manufactures; and such other particulars as people of sense desire to know. And there would be no manner of harm, if you were to take memorandums of such things in a note book to help your memory. The only way of knowing all these things is, to keep the best company, who can best inform you of them.

I am just now called away; so good-night!

LETTER XV.

DEAR BOY, London, July the 30th, 1747.

As you must attend to your manners, so you must not neglect your person; but take care to be very clean, well dressed, and genteel; to have no disagreeable attitudes, nor awkward tricks; which many people accustom themselves to, and then cannot leave them off. Do you take care to keep your teeth very clean, by washing them constantly every morning, and after every meal? This is very necessary, both to preserve your teeth a great while, and to save you a great deal of pain. Mine have plagued me long, and are now falling out, merely for want of care when I was of your age. Do you dress well, and not too well? Do you consider your air and manner of presenting yourself enough, and not too much? neither negligent nor stiff. All these things deserve a degree of care, a second-rate attention; they give an additional luster to real merit. My Lord Bacon says, that a pleasing figure is a perpetual letter of recommendation. It is certainly an agreeable forerunner of merit, and smooths the way for it.

LETTER XVI.

DEAR BOY, London, October the 9th, 1747.

PEOPLE of your age have commonly an unguarded frankness about them, which makes them the easy prey and bubbles of the artful and the experienced: they look

upon every knave, or fool, who tells them that he is their friend, to be really so; and pay that profession of simulated friendship with an indiscreet and unbounded confidence, always to their loss, often to their ruin. Beware, therefore, now that you are coming into the world, of these proffered friendships. Do not let your vanity and self-love make you suppose that people become your friends at first sight, or even upon a short acquaintance. Real friendship is a slow grower; and never thrives, unless ingrafted upon a stock of known and reciprocal merit. There is another kind of nominal friendship, among young people, which is warm for the time, but, by good luck, of short duration. This friendship is hastily produced by their being accidentally thrown together, and pursuing the same course of riot and debauchery. A fine friendship, truly! and well cemented by drunkenness and lewdness. It should rather be called a conspiracy against morals and good manners, and be punished as such by the civil magistrate. However, they have the impudence and the folly to call this confederacy a friendship. They lend one another money for bad purposes; they engage in quarrels, offensive and defensive, for their accomplices; they tell one another all they know, and often more too; when, of a sudden, some accident disperses them, and they think no more of each other, unless it be to betray and laugh at their imprudent confidence. Remember to make a great difference between companions and friends; for a very complaisant and agreeable companion may, and often does, prove a very improper and a very dangerous friend. People will, in a great degree, and not without reason, form their opinion of you upon that which they

have of your friends; and there is a Spanish proverb, which says very justly, *Tell me whom you live with, and I will tell you who you are.* One may fairly suppose that a man who makes a knave or a fool his friend, has something very bad to do, or to conceal. But, at the same time that you carefully decline the friendship of knaves and fools, if it can be called friendship, there is no occasion to make either of them your enemies, wantonly and unprovoked; have a real reserve with almost everybody.

The next thing to the choice of your friends is the choice of your company. Endeavor, as much as you can, to keep company with people above you. There you rise, as much as you sink with people below you; for (as I have mentioned before) you are whatever the company you keep is. Do not mistake, when I say company above you, and think that I mean with regard to their birth; that is the least consideration: but I mean with regard to their merit, and the light in which the world considers them.

There are two sorts of good company; one which is called the Society and consists of those people who have the lead in Courts, and in the gay part of life; the other consists of those who are distinguished by some peculiar merit, or who excel in some particular and valuable art or science. For my own part, I used to think myself in company as much above me, when I was with Mr. Addison and Mr. Pope, as if I had been with all the princes in Europe. What I mean by low company, which should by all means be avoided, is the company of those who, absolutely insignificant and contemptible in themselves, think they are honored by being in your company,

and who flatter every vice and every folly you have, in order to engage you to converse with them. The pride of being the first of the company is but too common; but it is very silly and very prejudicial. Nothing in the world lets down a character more than that wrong turn.

You may possibly ask me whether a man has it always in his power to get into the best company? and how? I say, Yes, he has, by deserving it; provided he is but in circumstances which enable him to appear upon the footing of a gentleman. Merit and good breeding will make their way everywhere. Knowledge will introduce him, and good breeding will endear him to the best companies; for, as I have often told you, politeness and good breeding are absolutely necessary to adorn any or all other good qualities or talents. Without them, no knowledge, no perfection whatsoever, is seen in its best light. The Scholar, without good breeding, is a Pedant; the Philosopher, a Cynic; the Soldier, a brute; and every man disagreeable. Adieu.

LETTER XVII.

DEAR BOY, London, October the 16th, 1747.

THE art of pleasing is a very necessary one to possess, but a very difficult one to acquire. It can hardly be reduced to rules, and your own good sense and observation will teach you more of it than I can. Do as you would be done by is the surest method that I know of pleasing. Observe carefully what pleases you in others, and probably the same things in you will please others. Do not tell

stories in company; there is nothing more tedious and disagreeable: if by chance you know a very short story, and exceedingly applicable to the present subject of conversation, tell it in as few words as possible; and even then throw out that you do not love to tell stories, but that the shortness of it tempted you. Of all things, banish egotism from your conversation, and never think of entertaining people with your own personal concerns or private affairs; though they are interesting to you, they are tedious and impertinent to everybody else; besides that, one cannot keep one's own private affairs too secret. Whatever you think your own excellencies may be, do not affectedly display them in company; nor labor, as many people do, to give that turn to the conversation which may supply you with an opportunity of exhibiting them. If they are real, they will infallibly be discovered without your pointing them out yourself, and with much more advantage. Never maintain an argument with heat and clamor, though you think or know yourself to be in the right; but give your opinion modestly and coolly which is the only way to convince; and if that does not do, try to change the conversation, by saying, with good humor, "We shall hardly convince one another, nor is it necessary that we should, so let us talk of something else."

Remember that there is a local propriety to be observed in all companies; and that what is extremely proper in one company may be, and often is, highly improper in another.

LETTER XVIII.

DEAR BOY, London, December the 11th, 1747.

THERE is nothing which I more wish that you should know, and which fewer people do know, than the true use and value of Time. It is in everybody's mouth, but in few people's practice. Every fool, who slatterns away his whole time in nothings, utters, however, some trite commonplace sentence, of which there are millions, to prove at once the value and fleetness of time. The sun-dials, likewise, all over Europe, have some ingenious inscription to that effect; so that nobody squanders away their time without hearing and seeing daily how necessary it is to employ it well, and how irrecoverable it is if lost. But all these admonitions are useless, where there is not a fund of good sense and reason to suggest them, rather than receive them. By the manner in which you now tell me that you employ your time, I flatter myself that you have that fund; that is the fund which will make you rich indeed. I do not, therefore, mean to give you a critical essay upon the use and abuse of time; I will only give you some hints with regard to the use of one particular period of that long time which, I hope, you have before you; I mean the next two years. Remember, then, that whatever knowledge you do not solidly lay the foundation of before you are eighteen, you will never be master of while you breathe. Knowledge is a comfortable and necessary retreat and shelter for us in an advanced age; and if we do not plant it while young, it will give us no shade when we grow old. If you should sometimes

think it a little laborious, consider that labor is the unavoidable fatigue of a necessary journey. The more hours a day you travel, the sooner you will be at your journey's end. The sooner you are qualified for your liberty, the sooner you shall have it; and your manumission will entirely depend upon the manner in which you employ the intermediate time. I think I offer you a very good bargain, when I promise you, upon my word, that if you will do everything that I would have you do, till you are eighteen, I will do everything that you would have me do, ever afterwards.

Books of science, and of a grave sort, must be read with continuity; but there are very many, and even very useful ones, which may be read with advantage by snatches, and unconnectedly: such are all the good Latin Poets, except Virgil in his Æneid; and such are most of the modern poets, in which you will find many pieces worth reading, that will not take up above seven or eight minutes. Bayle's, Moreri's, and other dictionaries are proper books to take and shut up for the little intervals of (otherwise) idle time, that everybody has in the course of the day, between either their studies or their pleasures. Good-night.

LETTER XIX.

DEAR BOY, London, January the 15th, 1748.

MAKE yourself master of Ancient and Modern History, and Languages. To know perfectly the constitution and form of government of every nation; the growth and the

decline of ancient and modern Empires; and to trace out and reflect upon the causes of both. To know the strength, the riches, and the commerce of every country. There are some additional qualifications necessary in the practical part of business, which may deserve some consideration in your leisure moments; such as an absolute command of your temper, so as not to be provoked to passion upon any account: Patience to hear frivolous, impertinent, and unreasonable applications; with address enough to refuse, without offending; or by your manner of granting, to double the obligation: Dexterity enough to conceal a truth without telling a lie: Sagacity enough to read other people's countenances: and Serenity enough not to let them discover anything by yours. These are the rudiments of a Politician; the world must be your grammar. Yours.

LETTER XX.

DEAR BOY, Bath, February the 16th, 1748.

I HAVE given the description of the life that I propose to lead for the future, in this motto, which I have put up in the frieze of my library in my new house:

> Nunc veterum libris, nunc somno, et inertibus horis
> Ducere sollicitæ jucunda oblivia vitæ.[1]

I must observe to you, upon this occasion, that the uninterrupted satisfaction which I expect to find in that

[1] Now with old books, now in slumber and at leisure, pleasing forgetfulness allures from anxious care.

library, will be chiefly owing to my having employed some part of my life well at your age. I wish I had employed it better, and my satisfaction would now be complete; but, however, I planted, while young, that degree of knowledge which is now my refuge and my shelter. Make your plantations still more extensive, they will more than pay you for your trouble. I do not regret the time that I passed in pleasures; they were seasonable, they were the pleasures of youth, and I enjoyed them while young. If I had not, I should probably have overvalued them now, as we are very apt to do what we do not know: but, knowing them as I do, I know their real value, and how much they are generally overrated. Nor do I regret the time that I have passed in business, for the same reason; those who see only the outside of it imagine that it has hidden charms, which they pant after; and nothing but acquaintance can undeceive them. I, who have been behind the scenes, both of pleasure and business, and have seen all the springs and pulleys of those decorations which astonish and dazzle the audience, retire, not only without regret, but with contentment and satisfaction. But what I do and ever shall regret, is the time which, while young, I lost in mere idleness and in doing nothing. This is the common effect of the inconsideracy of youth, against which I beg you will be most carefully upon your guard. The value of moments, when cast up, is immense, if well employed; if thrown away, their loss is irrecoverable. Every moment may be put to some use, and that with much more pleasure than if unemployed. Do not imagine that, by the employment of time, I mean an uninterrupted application to serious studies. No; pleasures are, at proper times, both

as necessary and as useful: they fashion and form you for the world; they teach you characters, and show you the human heart in its unguarded minutes. But, then, remember to make that use of them. I have known many people, from laziness of mind, go through both pleasure and business with equal inattention; neither enjoying the one, nor doing the other; thinking themselves men of pleasure, because they were mingled with those who were; and men of business, because they had business to do, though they did not do it. Whatever you do, do it to the purpose; do it thoroughly, not superficially. Go to the bottom of things. Anything half done, or half known, is, in my mind, neither done nor known at all. Nay worse, for it often misleads. There is hardly any place, or any company, where you may not gain knowledge if you please; almost everybody knows some one thing, and is glad to talk upon that one thing. Seek and you will find, in this world as well as in the next. See everything, inquire into everything; and you may excuse your curiosity, and the questions you ask, which otherwise might be thought impertinent, by your manner of asking them; for most things depend a great deal upon the manner. As, for example, *I am afraid that I am very troublesome with my questions; but nobody can inform me so well as you;* or something of that kind.

When you frequent places of public worship, as I would have you go to all the different ones you meet with, remember that however erroneous, they are none of them objects of laughter and ridicule. Honest error is to be pitied, not ridiculed. The object of all the public worships in the world is the same; it is that great eternal

Being, who created everything. The different manners of worship are by no means subjects of ridicule. Each sect thinks its own the best; and I know no infallible judge in this world to decide which is the best. Make the same inquiries, wherever you are, concerning the revenues, the military establishment, the trade, the commerce, and the police of every country. And you would do well to keep a note book, which the Germans call an *Album:* and there, instead of desiring, as they do, every fool they meet with to scribble something, write down all these things as soon as they come to your knowledge from good authorities.

I had almost forgotten one thing which I would recommend as an object for your curiosity and information, that is, the Administration of Justice; which, as it is always carried on in open Court, you may, and I would have you, go and see it with attention and inquiry.

I have now but one anxiety left which is concerning you. I would have you be, which I know nobody is, perfect. Yours.

LETTER XXI.

DEAR BOY, Bath, February the 22nd, 1748.

EVERY excellency, and every virtue, has its kindred vice or weakness; and if carried beyond certain bounds, sinks into the one or the other. Generosity often runs into Profusion, Economy into Avarice, Courage into Rashness, Caution into Timidity, and so on: — insomuch that, I believe, there is more judgment required for the proper conduct of our virtues, than for avoiding their

opposite vices. Vice, in its true light, is so deformed, that it shocks us at first sight; and would hardly ever seduce us, if it did not at first wear the mask of some Virtue. But Virtue is in itself so beautiful, that it charms us at first sight; engages us more and more, upon further acquaintance; and, as with other Beauties, we think excess impossible: it is here that judgment is necessary to moderate and direct the effects of an excellent cause. I shall apply this reasoning, at present, not to any particular virtue, but to an excellency, which for want of judgment is often the cause of ridiculous and blamable effects; I mean, great Learning, which, if not accompanied with sound judgment, frequently carries us into Error, Pride, and Pedantry. As I hope you will possess that excellency in its utmost extent, and yet without its too common failings, the hints which my experience can suggest may probably not be useless to you.

Some learned men, proud of their knowledge, only speak to decide, and give judgment without appeal. The consequence of which is, that mankind, provoked by the insult, and injured by the oppression, revolt; and in order to shake off the tyranny, even call the lawful authority in question. The more you know, the more modest you should be: and (by the by) that modesty is the surest way of gratifying your vanity. Even where you are sure, seem rather doubtful: represent, but do not pronounce; and if you would convince others, seem open to conviction yourself.

Others, to show their learning, or often from the prejudices of a school education, where they hear of nothing else, are always talking of the Ancients as something more

than men, and of the Moderns as something less. They are never without a Classic or two in their pockets; they stick to the old good sense; they read none of the modern trash; and will show you plainly that no improvement has been made in any one art or science these last seventeen hundred years. I would by no means have you disown your acquaintance with the Ancients; but still less would I have you brag of an exclusive intimacy with them. Speak of the Moderns without contempt, and of the Ancients without idolatry; judge them all by their merits, but not by their ages; and if you happen to have an Elzevir classic in your pocket, neither show it nor mention it.

Some great Scholars most absurdly draw all their maxims, both for public and private life, from what they call Parallel Cases in the ancient authors; without considering, that, in the first place, there never were, since the creation of the world, two cases exactly parallel: and, in the next place, that there never was a case stated, or even known, by any Historian, with every one of its circumstances; which, however, ought to be known, in order to be reasoned from. Reason upon the case itself and the several circumstances that attend it, and act accordingly: but not from the authority of ancient Poets or Historians. Take into your consideration, if you please, cases seemingly analogous; but take them as helps only, not as guides. We are really so prejudiced by our educations, that, as the Ancients deified their Heroes, we deify their Madmen: of which, with all due regard to

Elzevirs = famous Holland publishers.

antiquity, I take Leonidas and Curtius to have been two distinguished ones. And yet a stolid Pedant would, in a speech in Parliament, relative to a tax of twopence in the pound, upon some commodity or other, quote those two heroes, as examples of what we ought to do and suffer for our country. I have known these absurdities carried so far, by people of injudicious learning, that I should not be surprised, if some of them were to propose, while we are at war with the Gauls, that a number of geese should be kept in the Tower, upon account of the infinite advantage which Rome received, *in a parallel case*, from a certain number of geese in the Capitol. This way of reasoning, and this way of speaking, will always form a poor politician, and a puerile declaimer.

There is another species of learned men, who, though less dogmatical and supercilious, are not less impertinent. These are the communicative and shining Pedants, who adorn their conversation, even with women, by happy quotations of Greek and Latin, and who have contracted such a familiarity with the Greek and Roman authors, that they call them by certain names or epithets denoting intimacy. As *old* Homer; that *sly rogue* Horace; *Maro*, instead of Virgil; and *Naso*, instead of Ovid. These are often imitated by coxcombs who have no learning at all, but who have got some names and some scraps of ancient authors by heart, which they improperly and impertinently retail in all companies, in hopes of passing for scholars. If, therefore, you would avoid the accusation of pedantry, on one hand, or the suspicion of ignorance, on the other, abstain from learned ostentation. Speak the language of the company that you are in; speak it purely, and

unlarded with any other. Never seem wiser, nor more learned, than the people you are with. Wear your learning, like your watch, in a private pocket; and do not pull it out, merely to show that you have one. If you are asked what o'clock it is, tell it; but do not proclaim it hourly and unasked, like the watchman.

Upon the whole, remember that learning (I mean Greek and Roman learning) is a most useful and necessary ornament, which it is shameful not to be master of; but at the same time most carefully avoid those errors and abuses which I have mentioned, and which too often attend it. Remember, too, that great modern knowledge is still more necessary than ancient; and that you had better know perfectly the present than the old state of Europe; though I would have you well acquainted with both.

Though, I confess, there is no great variety in your present manner of life, yet materials can never be wanting for a letter; you see, you hear, or you read, something new every day; a short account of which, with your own reflections thereupon, will make out a letter very well.

LETTER XXII.

DEAR BOY, Bath, March the 9th, 1748.

To engage the affection of any particular person, you must, over and above your general merit, have some particular merit to that person; by services done or offered; by expressions of regard and esteem; by complaisance, attentions, etc., for him; and the graceful manner of doing all these things opens the way to the

heart, and facilitates, or rather insures, their effects. From your own observation, reflect what a disagreeable impression an awkward address, a slovenly figure, an ungraceful manner of speaking, whether stuttering, muttering, monotony, or drawling, an inattentive behavior, etc., make upon you, at first sight, in a stranger, and how they prejudice you against him, though, for aught you know, he may have great intrinsic sense and merit. And reflect, on the other hand, how much the opposites of all these things prepossess you at first sight in favor of those who enjoy them. You wish to find all good qualities in them, and are in some degree disappointed if you do not. A thousand little things, not separately to be defined, conspire to form these Graces, this indescribable something, that always pleases. A pretty person, genteel motions, a proper degree of dress, an harmonious voice, something open and cheerful in the countenance, but without laughing; a distinct and properly varied manner of speaking; all these things, and many others, are necessary ingredients in the composition of the pleasing indescribable something, which everybody feels, though nobody can describe. Observe carefully, then, what displeases or pleases you in others, and be persuaded that in general the same things will please or displease them in you. Frequent and loud laughter is the characteristic of folly and ill manners; it is the manner in which the mob express their silly joy, at silly things; and they call it being merry. In my mind, there is nothing so illiberal, and so ill bred, as audible laughter. True wit, or sense, never yet made anybody laugh; they are above it; they please the mind, and give a cheerfulness to the countenance. But it is low

buffoonery, or silly accidents, that always excite laughter; and that is what people of sense and breeding should show themselves above. A man's going to sit down, in the supposition that he has a chair behind him, and falling down for want of one, sets a whole company a-laughing, when all the wit in the world would not do it; a plain proof, in my mind, how low and unbecoming a thing laughter is. Not to mention the disagreeable noise that it makes, and the shocking distortion of the face that it occasions. Laughter is easily restrained by a very little reflection, but as it is generally connected with the idea of gaiety, people do not enough attend to its absurdity. I am neither of a melancholy nor a cynical disposition; and am as willing and as apt to be pleased as anybody; but I am sure that, since I have had the full use of my reason, nobody has ever heard me laugh. Many people, at first from awkwardness and false modesty, have got a very disagreeable and silly trick of laughing whenever they speak. This and many other disagreeable habits are owing to false modesty at their first setting out in the world. They are ashamed in company, and so disconcerted that they do not know what they do, and try a thousand tricks to keep themselves in countenance; which tricks afterwards grow habitual to them. Some put their fingers in their nose, others scratch their head, others twirl their hats; in short, every awkward, ill-bred body has his trick. But the frequency does not justify the thing; and all these vulgar habits and awkwardnesses, though not criminal indeed, are most carefully to be guarded against, as they are great bars in the way of the art of pleasing. Remember, that to please is almost to prevail, or at least a necessary

previous step to it. If you desire to make yourself considerable in the world (as, if you have any spirit, you do) it must be entirely your own doing; for I may very possibly be out of the world at the time you come into it. Your own rank and fortune will not assist you; your merit and your manners can alone raise you to figure and fortune. I have laid the foundations of them by the education which I have given you; but you must build the superstructure yourself.

LETTER XXIII.

DEAR BOY, London, April the 1st, 1748.

YOUR health will continue while your temperance continues; and at your age nature takes sufficient care of the body, provided she is left to herself, and that intemperance on one hand, or medicines on the other, do not break in upon her. But it is by no means so with the mind, which at your age particularly requires great and constant care, and some physic. Every quarter of an hour well or ill employed, will do it essential and lasting good or harm. It requires also a great deal of exercise to bring it to a state of health and vigor. Observe the difference there is between minds cultivated and minds uncultivated, and you will, I am sure, think that you cannot take too much pains, nor employ too much of your time, in the culture of your own. People are in general what they are made, by education and company, from fifteen to five-and-twenty; consider well, therefore, the importance of your next eight or nine years; your

whole depends upon them. I will tell you sincerely my hopes and my fears concerning you. I fear that you neglect what are called little, though in truth they are very material, things; I mean a gentleness of manners, an engaging address, and an insinuating behavior: they are real and solid advantages, and none but those who do not know the world, treat them as trifles. I am told that you speak very quick, and not distinctly; this is a most ungraceful and disagreeable trick, which you know I have told you of a thousand times; pray attend carefully to the correction of it. An agreeable and distinct manner of speaking adds greatly to the matter; and I have known many a very good speech unregarded upon account of the disagreeable manner in which it has been delivered, and many an indifferent one applauded, for the contrary reason. Adieu.

LETTER XXIV.

DEAR BOY, London, June 21st, 1748.

READ what Cicero and Quintilian say of Enunciation, and see what a stress they lay upon the gracefulness of it; nay, Cicero goes further, and even maintains that a good figure is necessary for an Orator; and particularly that he must not be overgrown and clumsy. He shows by it that he knew mankind well, and knew the powers of an agreeable figure and a graceful manner. Men, as well as women, are much oftener led by their hearts than by their understandings. The way to the heart is through the senses; please their eyes and their ears, and the work is half done. I have frequently known a man's fortune

decided forever by his first address. If it is pleasing, people are hurried involuntarily into a persuasion that he has a merit, as, on the other hand, if it is ungraceful, they are immediately prejudiced against him; and unwilling to allow him the merit which it may be he has. Nor is this sentiment so unjust and unreasonable as at first it may seem; for if a man has parts he must know of what infinite consequence it is to him to have a graceful manner of speaking and a genteel and pleasing address: he will cultivate and improve them to the utmost. What is the constant and just observation as to all actors upon the stage? Is it not that those who have the best sense always speak the best, though they may happen not to have the best voices? They will speak plainly, distinctly, and with the proper emphasis, be their voices ever so bad. Had Roscius spoken *quick*, *thick*, and *ungracefully*, I will answer for it, that Cicero would not have thought him worth the oration which he made in his favor. Words were given us to communicate our ideas by; and there must be something inconceivably absurd in uttering them in such a manner as that either people cannot understand them or will not desire to understand them. You will desire Mr. Harte that you may read aloud to him every day; and that he will interrupt and correct you ever time that you read too fast, do not observe the proper stops, or lay a wrong emphasis. You will take care to open your teeth when you speak; to articulate every word distinctly; and to beg of whomever you speak to, to remind and stop you, if ever you fall into the rapid and unintelligible mutter. You will even read aloud to yourself and tune your utterance to your own ear; and read at first much

slower than you need to do, in order to correct yourself of that shameful trick of speaking faster than you ought. In short, you will make it your business, your study, and your pleasure, to speak well if you think right. Therefore, what I have said in this, and in my last, is more than sufficient, if you have sense; and ten times more would not be sufficient if you have not: so here I rest it.

Next to graceful speaking, a genteel carriage, and a graceful manner of presenting yourself, are extremely necessary, for they are extremely engaging; and carelessness in these points is much more unpardonable in a young fellow than affectation. It shows an offensive indifference about pleasing. I am told by one here who has seen you lately, that you are awkward in your motions, and negligent of your person: I am sorry for both; and so you will be, when it will be too late, if you continue so some time longer. Awkwardness of carriage is very alienating; and a total negligence of dress, and air, is an impertinent insult upon custom and fashion.

I will now conclude with suggesting one reflection to you, which is, that you should be sensible of your good fortune, in having one who interests himself enough in you to inquire into your faults, in order to inform you of them. Nobody but myself would be so solicitous, either to know or correct them; so that you might consequently be ignorant of them yourself; for our own self-love draws a thick veil between us and our faults. But when you hear yours from me, you may be sure that you hear them from one who, for your sake only, desires to correct them; from one whom you cannot suspect of any partiality but

in your favor; and from one who heartily wishes that his care of you, as a father, may in a little time render every care unnecessary but that of a friend. Adieu.

LETTER XXV.

DEAR BOY, London, July the 26th, 1748.

THERE are two sorts of understandings; one of which hinders a man from ever being considerable, and the other commonly makes him ridiculous; I mean the lazy mind, and the trifling, frivolous mind. Yours, I hope, is neither. The lazy mind will not take the trouble of going to the bottom of anything, but, discouraged by the first difficulties (and everything worth knowing or having is attended with some), stops short, contents itself with easy, and consequently superficial, knowledge, and prefers a great degree of ignorance to a small degree of trouble. These people either think or represent most things as impossible, whereas few things are so to industry and activity. But difficulties seem to them impossibilities, or at least they pretend to think them so, by way of excuse for their laziness. An hour's attention to the same object is too laborious for them; they take everything in the light in which it first presents itself, never consider it in all its different views, and, in short, never think it thorough. The consequence of this is, that when they come to speak upon these subjects before people who have considered them with attention, they only discover their own ignorance and laziness, and lay themselves open to answers that put them in confusion. Do not, then, be

discouraged by the first difficulties, but resolve to go to the bottom of all those things which every gentleman ought to know well. Such are languages, history, and geography ancient and modern; philosophy, rational logic, rhetoric; and, for you particularly, the constitution, and the civil and military state, of every country in Europe. This, I confess, is a pretty large circle of knowledge, attended with some difficulties, and requiring some trouble; which, however, an active and industrious mind will overcome, and be amply repaid by. The trifling and frivolous mind is always busied, but to little purpose; it takes little objects for great ones, and throws away upon trifles that time and attention which only important things deserve. Knickknacks, butterflies, shells, insects, etc., are the objects of their most serious researches. They contemplate the dress, not the characters, of the company they keep. They attend more to the decorations of a Play, than to the sense of it; and to the ceremonies of a Court, more than to its politics. Such an employment of time is an absolute loss of it. You have now, at most, three years to employ either well or ill; for as I have often told you, you will be all your life what you shall be three years hence. Then, reflect: Will you throw away this time, either in laziness, or in trifles? Or will you not rather employ every moment of it in a manner that must so soon reward you, with so much pleasure, figure, and character? I cannot, I will not, doubt of your choice. Read only useful books; and never quit a subject till you are thoroughly master of it, but read and inquire on till then. When you are in company, bring the conversation to some useful subject. Points of his-

tory, matters of literature, the customs of particular countries, the several Orders of Knighthood, as Teutonic, Maltese, etc., are surely better subjects of conversation than the weather, dress, or fiddle-faddle stories, that carry no information along with them. The characters of Kings, and great Men, are only to be learned in conversation; for they are never fairly written during their lives. This, therefore, is an entertaining and instructive subject of conversation, and will likewise give you an opportunity of observing how very differently characters are given, from the different passions and views of those who give them. Never be ashamed nor afraid of asking questions; for if they lead to information, and if you accompany them with some excuse, you will never be reckoned an impertinent or rude questioner. All those things, in the common course of life, depend entirely upon the manner; and in that respect the vulgar saying is true, "That one man may better steal a horse, than another look over the hedge." There are few things that may not be said, in some manner or other; either in a seeming confidence, or a genteel irony, or introduced with wit: and one great part of the knowledge of the world consists in knowing when and where to make use of these different manners. The graces of the person, the countenance, and the way of speaking, contribute so much to this, that I am convinced the very same thing said by a genteel person, in an engaging way, and *gracefully* and distinctly spoken, would please; which would shock, if *muttered* out by an awkward figure, with a sullen, serious countenance. The Poets always represent Venus as attended by the three Graces, to intimate that even Beauty will not do without.

I think they should have given Minerva three also; for without them, I am sure, learning is very unattractive. Invoke them, then, *distinctly*, to accompany all your words and motions. Adieu.

LETTER XXVI.

DEAR BOY, Bath, October the 19th, 1748.

HAVING in my last pointed out what sort of company you should keep, I will now give you some rules for your conduct in it; rules which my own experience and observation enable me to lay down, and communicate to you with some degree of confidence.

Talk often, but never long; in that case, if you do not please, at least you are sure not to tire your hearers. Pay your own reckoning, but do not treat the whole company; this being one of the very few cases in which people do not care to be treated, every one being fully convinced that he has wherewithal to pay.

Tell stories very seldom, and absolutely never but where they are very apt and very short. Omit every circumstance that is not material, and beware of digressions. To have frequent recourse to narrative betrays great want of imagination.

Never hold anybody by the button, or the hand, in order to be heard out; for, if people are not willing to hear you, you had much better hold your tongue than them.

Most long talkers single out some one unfortunate man in company (commonly him whom they observe to be the most silent, or their next neighbor) to whisper, or at least,

in a half voice, to convey a continuity of words to. This is excessively ill-bred, and, in some degree, a fraud, conversation stock being a joint and common property.

Avoid as much as you can, in mixed companies, argumentative, polemical conversations; which, though they should not, yet certainly do, indispose, for a time, the contending parties towards each other; and, if the controversy grows warm and noisy, endeavor to put an end to it by some genteel levity or joke. I quieted such a conversational hubbub once, by representing to them that though I was persuaded none there present would repeat, out of company, what passed in it, yet I could not answer for the discretion of the passengers in the street, who must necessarily hear all that was said.

Above all things, and upon all occasions, avoid speaking of yourself, if it be possible. Such is the natural pride and vanity of our hearts, that it perpetually breaks out, even in people of the best parts, in all the various modes and figures of the egotism.

But when historically you are obliged to mention yourself, take care not to drop one single word that can directly or indirectly be construed as fishing for applause. Be your character what it will, it will be known; and nobody will take it upon your own word. Never imagine that anything you can say yourself will varnish your defects, or add luster to your perfections; but, on the contrary, it may, and nine times in ten, will make the former more glaring, and the latter obscure. If you are silent upon your own subject, neither envy, indignation, nor ridicule will obstruct or allay the applause which you may really deserve; but if you publish your own panegyric,

upon any occasion or in any shape whatsoever, and however artfully dressed or disguised, they will all conspire against you, and you will be disappointed of the very end you aim at.

Take care never to seem dark and mysterious; which is not only a very unamiable character, but a very suspicious one, too; if you seem mysterious with others, they will be really so with you, and you will know nothing. A prudent reserve is therefore as necessary as a seeming openness is prudent. Always look people in the face when you speak to them; the not doing it is thought to imply conscious guilt; besides that, you lose the advantage of observing by their countenances what impression your discourse makes upon them. In order to know people's real sentiments, I trust much more to my eyes than to my ears; for they can say whatever they have a mind I should hear, but they can seldom help looking what they have no intention that I should know.

Neither retail nor receive scandal, willingly; for though the defamation of others may, for the present, gratify the malignity or the pride of our hearts, cool reflection will draw very disadvantageous conclusions from such a disposition; and in the case of scandal, as in that of robbery, the receiver is always thought as bad as the thief.

Mimicry, which is the common and favorite amusement of little, low minds, is in the utmost contempt with great ones. It is the lowest and most illiberal of all buffoonery. Pray neither practice it yourself, nor applaud it in others. Besides that, the person mimicked is insulted; and, as I have often observed to you before, an insult is never forgiven.

One word only as to swearing; and that I hope and believe is more than is necessary. You may sometimes hear some people in good company interlard their discourse with oaths, by way of embellishment, as they think; but you must observe, too, that those who do so are never those who contribute, in any degree, to give that company the denomination of good company. They are always subalterns, or people of low education; for that practice, besides that it has no one temptation to plead, is as silly and as illiberal as it is wicked.

LETTER XXVII.

DEAR BOY, London, January the 10th, 1749.

A FOOL squanders away, without credit or advantage to himself, more than a man of sense spends with both. The latter employs his money as he does his time, and never spends a shilling of the one, nor a minute of the other, but in something that is either useful or rationally pleasing to himself or others. The former buys whatever he does not want, and does not pay for what he does want. He cannot withstand the charms of a toy-shop; snuff-boxes, watches, heads of canes, etc., are his destruction. His servants and tradesmen conspire with his own indolence to cheat him; and in a very little time, he is astonished, in the midst of all his ridiculous superfluities, to find himself in want of all the real comforts and necessaries of life. Without care and method, the largest fortune will not, and with them, almost the smallest will, supply all necessary expense. As far as you can possibly,

pay ready money for everything you buy, and avoid bills. Pay that money, too, yourself, and not through the hands of any servant. Where you must have bills (as for meat and drink, clothes, etc.), pay them regularly every month, and with your own hand. Never, from a mistaken economy, buy a thing you do not want, because it is cheap; or from a silly pride, because it is dear. Keep an account, in a book, of all that you receive, and of all that you pay, for no man who knows what he receives and what he pays ever runs out. I do not mean that you should keep an account of the shillings and half-crowns which you may spend for trifles; leave such; but remember, in economy, as well as in every other part of life, to have the proper attention to proper objects, and the proper contempt for little ones. A strong mind sees things in their true proportions: a weak one views them through a magnifying medium; which, like the mieroscope, makes an elephant of a flea; magnifies all little objects, but cannot receive great ones. I have known many a man pass for a miser, by saving a penny, and wrangling for twopence, who was undoing himself at the same time, by living above his income, and not attending to essential articles which were above his capacity. The sure characteristic of a sound and strong mind is, to find in everything those certain bounds, upon which virtue, either one side or the other, cannot rest. These boundaries are marked out by a very fine line, which only good sense and attention can discover; it is much too fine for vulgar eyes. In Manners, this line is Good Breeding; beyond it, is troublesome ceremony; short of it, is unbecoming negligence and inattention.

LETTER XXVIII.

DEAR BOY, London, May the 15th, 1749.

While you are in danger, I shall be in fear; and you are in danger at Turin. I am informed there are now many English at the Academy at Turin. Who they are, I do not know; but I well know the general ill conduct, the indecent behavior, and the illiberal views of my young countrymen abroad; especially wherever they are in numbers together. Ill example is of itself dangerous enough; but those who give it seldom stop there: they add their infamous exhortations and invitations; and, if these fail, they have recourse to ridicule; which is harder for one of your age and inexperience to withstand, than either of the former. Be upon your guard, therefore, against these batteries, which will all be played upon you. You are not sent abroad to converse with your own countrymen: among them, in general, you will get little knowledge, no languages, and, I am sure, no manners. I desire that you will form no connections, nor (what they impudently call) friendships, with these people: which are, in truth, only combinations and conspiracies against good morals and good manners. There is commonly, in young people, a facility that makes them unwilling to refuse anything that is asked of them; a false modesty, that makes them ashamed to refuse; and, at the same time, an ambition of pleasing and shining in the company they keep; these several causes produce the best effect in good company, but the very worst in bad. If

people had no vices but their own, few would have so many as they have. For my own part, I would sooner wear other people's clothes than their vices; and they would sit upon me just as well. I hope you will have none; but, if ever you have, I beg at least they may be all your own. Vices of adoption are, of all others, the most disgraceful and unpardonable. There are degrees in vices, as well as in virtues; and I must do my countrymen the justice to say, they generally take their vices in the lowest degree. By such conduct and in such company abroad, they come home, the unimproved, illiberal, and ungentlemanlike creatures, that one daily sees them; that is, in the Park, and in the streets, for one never meets them in good company; where they have neither manners to present themselves, nor merit to be received. But, with the manners of footmen and grooms, they assume their dress, too; for you must have observed them in the streets here, in dirty blue frocks, with oaken sticks in their hands, and their hair greasy and *unpowdered*, tucked up under their hats of an enormous size. Thus finished and adorned by their travels, they become the disturbers of playhouses; they break the windows, and commonly the landlords, of the taverns where they drink; and are at once the support, the terror, and the victims, of the infamous places they frequent. These poor mistaken people think they shine, and so they do, indeed; but it is as putrefaction shines, in the dark.

I am not now preaching to you, like an old fellow, upon either religious or moral texts; I am persuaded you do not want the best instructions of that kind: but I am advising you as a friend, as a man of the world, as one

who would not have you old while you are young, but would have you take all the pleasures that reason points out, and that decency warrants. I will therefore suppose, for argument's sake (for upon no other account can it be supposed), that all the vices above-mentioned were perfectly innocent in themselves; they would still degrade, vilify, and sink those who practiced them; would obstruct their rising in the world, by debasing their characters; and give them a low turn of mind and manners, absolutely inconsistent with their making any figure in upper life, and great business.

What I have now said, together with your own good sense, is, I hope, sufficient to arm you against the seduction, the invitations, or the profligate exhortations (for I cannot call them temptations) of those unfortunate young people. On the other hand, when they would engage you in these schemes, content yourself with a decent but steady refusal; avoid controversy upon such plain points. You are too young to convert them, and, I trust, too wise to be converted by them. Shun them, not only in reality, but even in appearance, if you would be well received in good company; for people will always be shy of receiving any man who comes from a place where the plague rages, let him look ever so healthy.

Pray send for the best operator for the teeth, at Turin, where, I suppose there is some famous one; and let him put yours in perfect order; and then take care to keep them so, afterwards, yourself. You had very good teeth, and I hope they are so still; but even those who have bad ones should keep them clean; for a dirty mouth is, in my mind, ill manners. In short, neglect nothing that can

possibly please. A thousand nameless little things, which nobody can describe, but which everybody feels, conspire to form that *whole* of pleasing; as the several pieces of a mosaic work, though separately of little beauty or value, when properly joined, form those beautiful figures which please everybody. A look, a gesture, an attitude, a tone of voice, all bear their parts in the great work of pleasing.

What I have said, with regard to my countrymen in general, does not extend to them all without exception.

Adieu, my dear child! Consider seriously the importance of the two next years, to your character, your figure, and your fortune.

LETTER XXIX.

DEAR BOY, London, September the 22nd, 1749.

He told me, then, that in company you were frequently most *provokingly* inattentive and absent-minded. That you came into a room and presented yourself very awkwardly; that at table you constantly threw down knives, forks, napkins, bread, etc., and that you neglected your person and dress, to a degree unpardonable at any age, and much more so at yours.

These things how immaterial soever they may seem to people who do not know the world and the nature of mankind, give me, who know them to be exceedingly material, very great concern. I have long distrusted you, and

He told me: Sir Charles Williams, a friend, who had seen the son and reported his impressions of him to Lord Chesterfield. He spoke with admiration "of the extent and correctness of your knowledge," but with his manners and bearing, he was less pleased, as appears above.

therefore frequently admonished you, upon these articles; and I tell you plainly that I shall not be easy till I hear a very different account of them. I know no one thing more offensive to a company than that inattention and *distraction*. It is showing them the utmost contempt, and people never forget contempt. No man is absent-minded with the man he fears, or the woman he loves; which is a proof that every man can get the better of that *distraction* when he thinks it worth his while to do so; and take my word for it, it is always worth his while. For my own part I would rather be in company with a dead man than with an absent one; for if the dead man gives me no pleasure, at least he shows me no contempt; whereas the absent man, silently indeed, but very plainly, tells me that he does not think me worth his attention. Besides, can an absent man make any observations upon the characters, customs, and manners of the company? No. He may be in the best companies all his lifetime (if they will admit him, which, if I were they, I would not) and never be one jot the wiser. I never will converse with an absent man; one may as well talk to a deaf one. It is in truth a practical blunder to address ourselves to a man, who we see plainly neither hears, minds, nor understands us. Moreover, I aver that no man is, in any degree, fit for either business or conversation, who cannot, and does not, direct and command his attention to the present object, be that what it will. You know by experience that I grudge no expense in your education, but I will positively not keep you a Flapper. You may read in Dr. Swift the description of these Flappers, and the use they were of to your friends the Laputans, whose minds (Gulliver says) are so taken up with intense speculations

that they neither can speak nor attend to the discourses of others, without being roused by some external action upon the organs of speech and hearing; for which reason those people who are able to afford it always keep a Flapper in their family as one of their domestics, nor ever walk about or make visits without him. This Flapper is likewise employed diligently to attend his master in his walks, and upon occasion to give a soft flap upon his eyes, because he is always so wrapped up in cogitation that he is in manifest danger of falling down every precipice, and bouncing his head against every post, and, in the streets, of jostling others, or being jostled into the kennel himself. In short, I give you fair warning that when we meet, if you are absent in mind, I will soon be absent in body, for it will be impossible for me to stay in the room; and if at table you throw down your knife, plate, bread, etc., and hack the wing of a chicken for half an hour without being able to cut it off, and your sleeve all the time in another dish, I must rise from table to escape the fever you would certainly give me. You have often seen, and I have as often made you observe, L——'s distinguished inattention and awkwardness. Wrapped up, like a Laputan, in intense thought, and possibly sometimes in no thought at all; which I believe is very often the case of absent people; he does not know his most intimate acquaintance by sight, or answers them as if he were at cross-purposes. He leaves his hat in one room, his sword in another, and would leave his shoes in a third, if his buckles, though awry, did not save them; his legs and arms, by his awkward management of them, seem to be dislocated; and his head, always hanging upon one or

other of his shoulders, seems to have received the first stroke upon a block. I sincerely value and esteem him for his Parts, Learning, and Virtue; but for the soul of me I cannot love him in company. This will be universally the case in common life, of every inattentive, awkward man, let his real merit and knowledge be ever so great. When I was of your age, I desired to shine, as far as I was able, in every part of life; and was as attentive to my Manners, my Dress, and my Air, in company on evenings, as to my Books and my Tutor in the mornings. A young fellow should be ambitious to shine in everything; and, of the two, always rather overdo than underdo. These things are by no means trifles; they are of infinite consequence to those who are to be thrown into the great world, and who would make a figure or a fortune in it. It is not sufficient to deserve well; one must please well too. Awkward, disagreeable merit will never carry anybody far. I should be sorry if you were an egregious fop; but I protest that of the two, I would rather have you a Fop than a Sloven. I think negligence in my own dress, even at my age, when certainly I expect no advantages from my dress, would be indecent with regard to others. I have done with fine clothes; but I will have my plain clothes fit me, and made like other people's. In the evenings, I recommend to you the company of women of fashion, who have a right to attention, and will be paid it. Their company will smooth your manners, and give you a habit of attention and respect; of which you will find the advantage among men.

LETTER XXX.

DEAR BOY, London, September the 27th, 1749.

A VULGAR, ordinary way of thinking, acting, or speaking, implies a low education, and a habit of low company. Young people contract it at school, or among servants, with whom they are too often used to converse; but, after they frequent good company, they must want attention and observation very much, if they do not lay it quite aside. And indeed if they do not, good company will be very apt to lay them aside. The various kinds of vulgarisms are infinite; I cannot pretend to point them out to you; but I will give you some samples, by which you may guess at the rest.

A vulgar man is captious and jealous; eager and impetuous about trifles. He suspects himself to be slighted, thinks everything that is said meant for him; if the company happens to laugh, he is persuaded they laugh at him; he grows angry and testy, says something very impertinent, and draws himself into a scrape, by showing what he calls a proper spirit, and asserting himself. A man of fashion does not suppose himself to be either the sole or principal object of the thoughts, looks, or words of the company; and never suspects that he is either slighted or laughed at, unless he is conscious that he deserves it. And if (which very seldom happens) the company is absurd or ill-bred enough to do either, he does not care twopence, unless the insult be so gross and plain as to require satisfaction of another kind. As he is

above trifles, he is never vehement and eager about them; and, wherever they are concerned, rather acquiesces than wrangles. A vulgar man's conversation always savors strongly of the lowness of his education and company. It turns chiefly upon his domestic affairs, his servants, the excellent order he keeps in his own family, and the little anecdotes of the neighborhood; all which he relates with emphasis, as interesting matters. He is a man gossip.

Vulgarism in language is the next and distinguishing characteristic of bad company and a bad education. A man of fashion avoids nothing with more care than that. Proverbial expressions and trite sayings are the flowers of the rhetoric of a vulgar man. Would he say that men differ in their tastes, he both supports and adorns that opinion by the good old saying, as he respectfully calls it, that *what is one man's Meat is another man's Poison.* If anybody attempts being *smart*, as he calls it, upon him, he gives them *Tit for Tat*, ay, that he does. He has always some favorite word for the time being, which, for the sake of using often, he commonly abuses. Such as *vastly* angry, *vastly* kind, *vastly* handsome, and *vastly* ugly. A man of fashion never has recourse to proverbs and vulgar aphorisms, uses neither favorite words nor hard words; but takes great care to speak very correctly and grammatically, and to pronounce properly; that is, according to the usage of the best companies.

An awkward address, ungraceful attitudes and actions, and a certain left-handedness (if I may use that word), loudly proclaim low education and low company; for it is impossible to suppose that a man can have frequented good company, without having caught something, at least, of

their air and motions. A newly raised man is distinguished in a regiment by his awkwardness; but he must be impenetrably dull if, in a month or two's time, he cannot perform at least the common manual exercise, and look like a soldier. The very accoutrements of a man of fashion are grievous encumbrances to a vulgar man. He is at a loss what to do with his hat, when it is not upon his head; his cane (if unfortunately he wears one) is at perpetual war with every cup of tea or coffee he drinks; destroys them first, and then accompanies them in their fall. His sword is formidable only to his own legs, which would possibly carry him fast enough out of the way of any sword but his own. His clothes fit him so ill, and constrain him so much, that he seems rather their prisoner than their proprietor. He presents himself in company like a criminal in a court of justice; his very air condemns him; and people of fashion will no more connect themselves with the one, than people of character will with the other. This repulse drives and sinks him into low company; a gulf from whence no man, after a certain age, ever emerged. Adieu.

LETTER XXXI.

DEAR BOY, London, November the 24th, 1749.

EVERY rational being (I take it for granted) proposes to himself some object more important than mere respiration and obscure animal existence. He desires to distinguish himself among his fellow-creatures; and, intent upon some object, either of brilliant deeds or

honorable conduct, he seeks fame. Cæsar, when embarking in a storm, said that it was not necessary he should live, but that it was absolutely necessary he should get to the place to which he was going. And Pliny leaves mankind this only alternative; either of doing what deserves to be written, or of writing what deserves to be read. As for those who do neither, I consider their life and death of equal value, since there is silence concerning each. You have, I am convinced, one or both of these objects in view; but you must know and use the necessary means, or your pursuit will be vain and frivolous. In either case, knowledge is the fountain head; but it is by no means all.

Style is the dress of thoughts; and let them be ever so just, if your style is homely, coarse, and vulgar, they will appear to as much disadvantage, and be as ill received, as your person, though ever so well-proportioned, would if dressed in rags, dirt, and tatters.

It is a very true saying, that a man must be born a Poet, but that he may make himself an Orator; and the very first principle of an Orator is, to speak his own language particularly, with the utmost purity and elegancy. A man will be forgiven even great errors in a foreign language, but in his own even the least slips are justly laid hold of and ridiculed.

A person of the House of Commons, speaking two years ago upon naval affairs, asserted that we had then the finest navy *upon the face of the yearth.* This happy mixture of blunder and vulgarism, you may easily imagine, was matter of immediate ridicule; but I can assure you that it continues so still, and will be remembered as long as he

lives and speaks. Another, speaking in defence of a gentleman upon whom a censure was moved, happily said, that he thought that gentleman was more *liable* to be thanked and rewarded, than censured. You know, I presume, that *liable* can never be used in a good sense.

You have with you three or four of the best English Authors, Dryden, Atterbury, and Swift; read them with the utmost care, and with a particular view to their language; and they may possibly correct that *curious infelicity of diction*, which you acquired at Westminster. I need not tell you how attentive the Romans and Greeks, particularly the Athenians, were to this object. It is also a study among the Italians and the French, witness their respective Academies and Dictionaries, for improving and fixing their languages. Cicero says, very truly, that it is glorious to excel other men in that very article, in which men excel brutes; *speech.*

Constant experience has shown me, that great purity and elegance of style, with a graceful elocution, cover a multitude of faults, in either a speaker or a writer.

You have read Quintilian, the best book in the world to form an Orator; pray read *Cicero* On Oratory, the best book in the world to finish one. Translate and retranslate, from and to Latin, Greek, and English; make yourself a pure and elegant English style; it requires nothing but application.

LETTER XXXII.

DEAR BOY, London, December, the 9th, 1749.

IT is now about forty years since I have spoken or written one single word without giving myself at least one moment's time to consider whether it was a good one or a bad one, and whether I could not find out a better in its place. An inharmonious and rugged period, at this time, shocks my ears. I will freely and truly own to you, without either vanity or false modesty, that whatever reputation I have acquired as a speaker is more owing to my constant attention to my diction, than to my matter, which was necessarily just the same of other people's.

It is in Parliament that I have set my heart upon your making a figure; it is there that I want to have you justly proud of yourself, and to make me justly proud of you. This means that you must be a good speaker there; I use the word *must*, because I know you may if you will. The vulgar, who are always mistaken, look upon a Speaker and a Comet with the same astonishment and admiration, taking them both for preternatural phenomena. This error discourages many young men from attempting that character; and good speakers are willing to have their talent considered as something very extraordinary, if not a peculiar gift of God to His elect. But let you and me analyze and simplify this good speaker; let us strip him of those adventitious plumes, with which his own pride, and the ignorance of others have decked him, and we shall find the true definition of him to be no more than

this : — A man of good common sense, who reasons justly, and expresses himself elegantly on that subject upon which he speaks. There is surely no witchcraft in this. A man of sense, without a superior and astonishing degree of parts, will not talk nonsense upon any subject ; nor will he, if he has the least taste or application, talk inelegantly. What, then, does all this mighty art and mystery of speaking in Parliament amount to? Why, no more than this, That the man who speaks in the House of Commons, speaks in that House, and to four hundred people, that opinion, upon a given subject, which he would make no difficulty of speaking in any house in England, round the fire, or at table, to any fourteen people whatsoever ; better judges, perhaps, and severer critics of what he says, than any fourteen gentlemen of the House of Commons.

I have spoken frequently in Parliament, and not always without some applause ; and therefore I can assure you, from my experience, that there is very little in it. The elegancy of the style, and the turn of the periods, make the chief impression upon the hearers. Give them but one or two round and harmonious periods in a speech, which they will retain and repeat ; and they will go home as well satisfied as people do from an Opera, humming all the way one or two favorite tunes that have struck their ears and were easily caught.

Cicero, conscious that he was at the top of his profession (for in his time Eloquence was a profession), in order to set himself off, defines, in his Treatise Concerning Oratory, an Orator to be such a man as never was, or never will be ; and, by this fallacious argument, says, that he must know every art and science whatsoever, or how

shall he speak upon them? But with submission to so great an authority, my definition of an Orator is extremely different from, and I believe much truer than his. I call that man an Orator who reasons justly, and expresses himhimself elegantly upon whatever subject he treats.

Thus I write whatever occurs to me, that I think may contribute either to form or inform you. May my labor not be in vain! and it will not, if you will but have half the concern for yourself that I have for you. Adieu.

LETTER XXXIII.

My dear Friend, London, January the 18th, 1750.

When you see a man, whose first address or approach strikes you, prepossesses you in his favor, and makes you entertain a good opinion of him, you do not know why; analyze and examine within yourself the several parts that composed it; and you will generally find it to be the result, the happy assemblage of modesty unembarrassed, respect without timidity, a genteel but unaffected attitude of body and limbs, an open, cheerful, but unsmirking countenance, and a dress, by no means negligent, and yet not foppish. Copy him, then, not servilely, but as some of the greatest masters of painting have copied others; insomuch that their copies have been equal to the originals, both as to beauty and freedom. When you see a man, who is universally allowed to shine as an agreeable, well-bred man, and a fine gentleman, attend to him, watch him carefully; observe in what manner he addresses himself to his superiors, how he lives with his equals, and

how he treats his inferiors. Mind his turn of conversation, in the several situations of morning visits, the table, and the evening amusements. Imitate, without mimicking him; and be his duplicate, but not his ape. You will find that he takes care never to say or do anything that can be construed into a slight or a negligence, or that can, in any degree, mortify people's vanity and self-love: on the contrary, you will perceive that he makes people pleased with him, by making them first pleased with themselves: he shows respect, regard, esteem, and attention, where they are severally proper; he sows them with care, and he reaps them in plenty.

These amiable accomplishments are all to be acquired by use and imitation; for we are, in truth, more than half what we are by imitation. The great point is, to choose good models, and to study them with care. People insensibly contract, not only the air, the manners, and the vices of those with whom they commonly converse, but their virtues, too, and even their way of thinking. This is so true, that I have known very plain understandings catch a certain degree of wit, by constantly conversing with those who had a great deal. Persist, therefore, in keeping the best company, and you will insensibly become like them; but if you add attention and observation, you will very soon be one of them. This inevitable contagion of company shows you the necessity of keeping the best, and avoiding all other; for in every one something will stick.

I here subjoin a list of all those necessary ornamental accomplishments (without which, no man living can either please, or rise in the world), which hitherto I fear

you want, and which only require your care and attention to possess.

To speak elegantly, whatever language you speak in; without which nobody will hear you with pleasure, and, consequently, you will speak to very little purpose.

An agreeable and distinct elocution; without which nobody will hear you with patience; this everybody may acquire, who is not born with some imperfection in the organs of speech. You are not; and therefore it is wholly in your power. You need take much less pains for it than Demosthenes did.

A distinguished politeness of manners and address; which common sense, observation, good company, and imitation, will infallibly give you, if you will accept of it. Adieu.

LETTER XXXIV.

MY DEAR FRIEND, London, February the 5th, 1750.

VERY few people are good economists of their Fortune, and still fewer of their Time; and yet, of the two, the latter is the more precious. I heartily wish you to be a good economist of both; and you are now of an age to begin to think seriously of these two important articles. Young people are apt to think they have so much time before them, that they may squander what they please of it, and yet have enough left; as very great fortunes have frequently seduced people to a ruinous profusion. Fatal mistakes, always repented of, but always too late! Old Mr. Lowndes, the famous secretary of the Treasury, used to say, *Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care*

of themselves. To this maxim, which he not only preached, but practiced, his two grandsons, at this time, owe the very considerable fortunes that he left them.

This holds equally true as to time; and I most earnestly recommend to you the care of those minutes and quarters of hours, in the course of the day, which people think too short to deserve their attention; and yet, if summed up at the end of the year, would amount to a very considerable portion of time. For example; you are to be at such a place at twelve, by appointment; you go out at eleven, to make two or three visits first; those persons are not at home: instead of sauntering away that immediate time at a coffee-house, and possibly alone, return home, write a letter, beforehand, for the ensuing post, or take up a good book. Stick to the best established books in every language; the celebrated Poets, Historians, Orators, or Philosophers.

Many people lose a great deal of their time by laziness; they loll and yawn in a great chair, tell themselves that they have not time to begin anything then, and that it will do as well another time. This is a most unfortunate disposition, and the greatest obstruction to both knowledge and business. If ever you propose commanding with dignity, you must serve up to it with diligence. Never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day.

Dispatch is the soul of business; and nothing contributes more to Dispatch, than Method. Lay down a method for everything, and stick to it inviolably, as far as unexpected incidents may allow. Fix one certain hour and day in the week for your accounts, and keep them together in their proper order; by which means they will

require very little time, and you can never be much cheated. Whatever letters and papers you keep, docket and tie them up in their respective classes, so that you may instantly have recourse to any one. Lay down a method also for your reading, for which you allot a certain share of your mornings; let it be in a consistent and consecutive course, and not in that desultory and immethodical manner, in which many people read scraps of different authors, upon different subjects. Keep a useful and short commonplace book of what you read, to help your memory only, and not for pedantic quotations. Never read History without having maps, and a chronological book, or tables, lying by you, and constantly recurred to; without which, History is only a confused heap of facts. One method more I recommend to you, by which I have found great benefit, even in the most dissipated part of my life; that is, to rise early, and at the same hour every morning, how late soever you may have sat up the night before. This secures you an hour or two, at least, of reading or reflection, before the common interruptions of the morning begin; and it will save your constitution, by forcing you to go to bed early.

You will say, it may be, as many young people would, that all this order and method is very troublesome, only fit for dull people, and a disagreeable restraint upon the noble spirit and fire of youth. I deny it; and assert, on the contrary, that it will procure you both more time and more taste for your pleasures; and so far from being troublesome to you, that after you have pursued it a month it would be troublesome to you to lay it aside. Business whets the appetite, and gives a taste to pleasures,

as exercise does to food: and business can never be done without method: it raises the spirits for pleasure; and a theater, a ball, an assembly, will much more sensibly affect a man who has employed, than a man who has lost, the preceding part of the day. Adieu.

LETTER XXXV.

My dear Friend, London, April the 30th, 1750.

Real merit of any kind, if it exists, cannot long be concealed; it will be discovered, and nothing can depreciate it but a man's exhibiting it himself. It may not always be rewarded as it ought; but it will always be known. Take great care never to tell in one company what you see or hear in another, much less to divert the present company at the expense of the last; but let discretion and secrecy be known parts of your character. They will carry you much farther, and much safer, than more shining talents.

LETTER XXXVI.

My dear Friend, London, July the 9th, 1750.

I should not deserve that appellation in return from you, if I did not freely and explicitly inform you of every corrigible defect, which I may either hear of, suspect, or at any time discover in you. Those who in the common course of the world will call themselves your friends, or whom, according to the common notions of friendship, you may possibly think such, will never

tell you of your faults, still less of your weaknesses. But on the contrary, more desirous to make you their friend than to prove themselves yours, they will flatter both, and, in truth, not be sorry for either. Interiorly, most people enjoy the inferiority of their best friends. The useful and essential part of friendship to you is reserved singly for Mr. Harte and myself; our relations to you stand pure, and unsuspected of all private views. In whatever we say to you, we can have no interest but yours. We can have no competition, no jealousy, no secret envy or malignity. We are therefore authorized to represent, advise, and remonstrate; and your reason must tell you that you ought to attend to and believe us.

Be your productions ever so good, they will be of no use, if you stifle and strangle them in their birth. The best compositions of Corelli, if ill executed, and played out of tune, instead of touching, as they do when well performed, would only excite the indignation of the hearers, when murdered by an unskilful performer. But to murder your own productions, and that in public, is a *Medean cruelty*, which Horace absolutely forbids. Remember of what importance Demosthenes, and one of the Gracchi, thought *enunciation;* read what stress Cicero and Quintilian lay upon it; even the herb-women at Athens were correct judges of it. Oratory with all its graces, that of enunciation in particular, is full as necessary in our government, as it ever was in Greece or Rome. No man can make a fortune or a figure in this country, without speaking, and speaking well, in public. If you will persuade, you must first please; and if you will please, you

Me-de′-an: after the fashion of Me-de′-a.

must tune your voice to harmony; you must articulate every syllable distinctly; your emphasis and cadences must be strongly and properly marked; and the whole together must be graceful and engaging; if you do not speak in that manner, you had much better not speak at all. Read aloud, though alone, and read articulately and distinctly, as if you were reading in public, and on the most important occasion. Recite pieces of eloquence, declaim scenes of tragedies, to Mr. Harte, as if he were a numerous audience. If there is any particular consonant which you have a difficulty in articulating, as I think you had with the *R*, utter it millions and millions of times, till you have uttered it right. Never speak quick, till you have first learned to speak well. In short, lay aside every book and every thought, that does not directly tend to this great object, absolutely decisive of your future fortune and figure.

The next thing necessary in your destination is, writing correctly, elegantly, and in a good hand, too; in which three particulars, I am sorry to tell you that you hitherto fail. Your handwriting is a very bad one, and would make a wretched figure in an office-book of letters, or even in a lady's pocket-book. But that fault is easily cured by care, since every man who has the use of his eyes and of his right hand, . . . As to the correctness and elegancy of your writing, attention to grammar does the one, and to the best authors the other.

Thus I have, with the truth and freedom of the tenderest affection, told you all your defects, at least all that I know or have heard of. They are all very curable, they must be cured, and I am sure you will cure them.

That once done, nothing remains for you to acquire, or for me to wish you, but the turn, the manners, the address, and the *graces* of the polite world; which experience, observation, and good company will insensibly give you. Few people at your age have read, seen, and known so much as you have, and consequently few are so near as yourself to what I call perfection, by which I only mean being very near as well as the best. Far, therefore, from being discouraged by what you still want, what you already have should encourage you to attempt, and convince you that by attempting you will inevitably obtain it. The difficulties which you have surmounted were much greater than any you have now to encounter. Till very lately your way has been only through thorns and briers; the few that now remain are mixed with roses. Pleasure is now the principal remaining part of your education. It will soften and polish your manners; it will make you pursue and at last overtake the *graces*. Pleasure is necessarily reciprocal; no one feels who does not at the same time give it. To be pleased, one must please. What pleases you in others, will in general please them in you. Paris is indisputably the seat of the *graces;* they will even court you, if you are not too coy. Frequent and observe the best companies there, and you will soon be naturalized among them; you will soon find how particularly attentive they are to the correctness and elegancy of their language, and to the graces of their enunciation; they would even call the understanding of a man in question, who should neglect or not know the infinite advantages arising from them.

LETTER XXXVII.

My dear Friend, London, November the 12th, 1750.

You will possibly think that this letter turns upon strange, little, trifling objects; and you will think right, if you consider them separately; but if you take them aggregately you will be convinced that as parts, which conspire to form that whole, called the exterior of a man of fashion, they are of importance. I shall not dwell now upon those personal graces, that liberal air, and that engaging address, which I have so often recommended to you, but descend still lower, to your dress, cleanliness, and care of your person.

When you come to Paris you must take care to be extremely well dressed, that is, as the fashionable people are; this does by no means consist in the finery, but in the taste, fitness, and manner of wearing your clothes. In your person you must be accurately clean; and your teeth, hands, and nails should be superlatively so: a dirty mouth has real ill consequences to the owner, for it infallibly causes the decay, as well as the intolerable pain, of the teeth; and it is very offensive to his acquaintance. I insist, therefore, that you wash your teeth the first thing you do every morning, with a soft sponge and warm water, for four or five minutes; and then wash your mouth five or six times. Nothing looks more ordinary, vulgar, and illiberal, than dirty hands, and ugly, uneven, and ragged nails: I do not suspect you of that shocking,

awkward trick, of biting yours; but that is not enough; you must keep the ends of them smooth and clean, not tipped with black, as the ordinary people's always are. The ends of your nails should be small segments of circles, which, by a very little care in the cutting, they are very easily brought to; every time that you wipe your hands, rub the skin round your nails backwards, that it may not grow up, and shorten your nails too much. The cleanliness of the rest of your person, which, by the way, will conduce greatly to your health, I refer from time to time to the bath. My mentioning these particulars arises (I freely own) from some suspicion that the hints are not unnecessary; for when you were a schoolboy, you were slovenly and dirty, above your fellows. I must add another caution, which is, that upon no account whatever you put your fingers, as too many people are apt to do, in your nose or ears. It is the most shocking, nasty, vulgar rudeness that can be offered to company; it disgusts one, it turns one's stomach. Wash your ears well every morning, and blow your nose with your handkerchief whenever you have occasion. There should be in the least as well as in the greatest parts of a gentleman, good manners. Sense will teach you some, observation others: attend carefully to the manners, the diction, the motions, of people of the first fashion, and form your own upon them. On the other hand, observe a little those of the vulgar, in order to avoid them: for though the things which they say or do may be the same, the manner is always totally different: and in that, and nothing else, consists the characteristic of a man of fashion. The lowest peasant speaks, moves, dresses, eats, and drinks, as

much as a man of the first fashion, but does them all quite differently; so that by doing and saying most things in a manner opposite to that of the vulgar, you have a great chance of doing and saying them right. There are gradations in awkwardness and vulgarism, as there are in everything else.

Having said all this, I cannot help reflecting what a formal, dull fellow, or a cloistered pedant, would say, if they were to see this letter: they would look upon it with the utmost contempt, and say, that surely a father might find much better topics for advice to a son. I would admit it if I had given you, or that you were capable of receiving, no better; but if sufficient pains had been taken to form your heart and improve your mind, and, as I hope, not without success, I will tell those solid Gentlemen that all these trifling things, as they think them, collectively form that pleasing, indescribable something which they are utter strangers to both in themselves and others. The word *aimable* is not known in their language, or the thing in their manners. Great usage of the world, great attention, and a great desire of pleasing, can alone give it; and it is no trifle. It is from old people's looking upon these things as trifles, or not thinking of them at all, that so many young people are so awkward, and so ill-bred. Their parents, often careless and unmindful of them, give them only the common run of education, as school, university, and then traveling; without examining, and very often without being able to judge if they did examine, what progress they make in any one of these stages. Then they carelessly comfort themselves, and say that their sons

will do like other people's sons; and so they do,that is, commonly very ill. They correct none of the childish, nasty tricks, which they get at school; nor the illiberal manners which they contract at the university; nor the frivolous and superficial pertness which is commonly all that they acquire by their travels. As they do not tell them of these things, nobody else can; so they go on in the practice of them, without ever hearing or knowing that they are unbecoming, indecent, and shocking. For, as I have often formerly observed to you, nobody but a father can take the liberty to reprove a young fellow grown up for those kinds of inaccuracies and improprieties of behavior. The most intimate friendship, unassisted by the paternal superiority, will not authorize it. I may truly say, therefore, that you are happy in having me for a sincere, friendly, and quick-sighted monitor. Nothing will escape me; I shall pry for your defects, in order to correct them, as curiously as I shall seek for your perfections, in order to applaud and reward them; with this difference only, that I shall publicly mention the latter, and never hint at the former, but in a letter to, or in conversation alone with, you. I will never put you out of countenance before company; and I hope you will never give me reason to be out of countenance for you, as any one of the above-mentioned defects would make me.

LETTER XXXVIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND, London, Jan. the 28th, 1751.

ALL gentlemen, and all men of business, write their names always in the same way, that their signature may

be so well known as not to be easily counterfeited; and they generally sign in rather a larger character than their common hand. I do not desire that you should write the labored, stiff character of a writing-master: a man of business must write quick and well, and that depends singly upon use. You will say, it may be, that when you write so very ill, it is because you are in a hurry: to which I answer, Why are you ever in a hurry? a man of sense may be in haste, but can never be in a hurry, because he knows, that whatever he does in a hurry he must necessarily do very ill. He may be in haste to dispatch an affair, but he will take care not to let that haste hinder his doing it well. Little minds are in a hurry, when the object proves (as it commonly does) too big for them; they run, they hare, they puzzle, confound, and perplex themselves; they want to do everything at once, and never do it at all. But a man of sense takes the time necessary for doing the thing he is about, well; and his haste to dispatch a business, only appears by the continuity of his application to it: he pursues it with a cool steadiness, and finishes it before he begins any other. I own your time is much taken up, and you have a great many different things to do; but remember that you had much better do half of them well, and leave the other half undone, than do them all indifferently. Consider, that if your very bad writing could furnish me with matter of ridicule, what will it not do to others, who do not view you in that partial light that I do. There was a Pope, I think it was Pope Chigi, who was justly ridiculed for his attention to little things, and his inability in great ones; and therefore he was called great in

little and little in great things. Why? Because he attended to little things, when he had great ones to do. At this particular period of your life, and at the place you are now in, you have only little things to do; and you should make it habitual to you to do them well, that they may require no attention from you when you have, as I hope you will have, greater things to mind. Make a good handwriting familiar to you now, that you may hereafter have nothing but your matter to think of, when you have occasion to write to Kings and Ministers. Dance, dress, present yourself habitually well now, that you may have none of those little things to think of hereafter, and which will be all necessary to be done well occasionally, when you will have greater things to do.

Take care to make as many personal friends, and as few personal enemies, as possible. I do not mean, by personal friends, intimate and confidential friends, of which no man can hope to have half-a-dozen in the whole course of his life, but I mean friends in the common acceptation of the word, that is, people who speak well of you, and who would rather do you good than harm, consistently with their own interest, and no further. Upon the whole, I recommend to you again and again the graces. Adieu, my dear child.

LETTER XXXIX.

MY DEAR FRIEND, London, May the 6th, 1751.

THE best authors are always the severest critics of their own works; they revise, correct, file, and polish them, till they think they have brought them to perfec-

tion. Considering you as my work, I do not look upon myself as a bad author, and am therefore a severe critic. I examine narrowly into the least inaccuracy or inelegancy, in order to correct, not to expose them, and that the work may be perfect at last. You are, I know, exceedingly improved in your air, address, and manners, since you have been at Paris; but still there is, I believe, room for further improvement, before you come to that perfection which I have set my heart upon seeing you arrive at: and till that moment I must continue filing and polishing. If it is a quick and hasty manner of speaking that people mistake, for decided and off-hand, prevent their mistakes for the future, by speaking more deliberately, and taking a softer tone of voice: as in this case you are free from the guilt, be free from the suspicion, too. Few people have penetration enough to discover, attention enough to observe, or even concern enough to examine, beyond the exterior; they take their notions from the surface, and go no deeper; they commend, as the gentlest and best-natured man in the world, that man who has the most engaging exterior manner, though possibly they have been but once in his company. An air, a tone of voice, a composure of countenance to mildness and softness, which are all easily acquired, do the business; and without further examination, and possibly with the contrary qualities, that man is reckoned the gentlest, the most modest, and the best-natured man alive. Happy the man who, with a certain fund of parts and knowledge, gets acquainted with the world early enough to make it his bubble, at an age when most people are the bubbles of the world! for that is the common case of youth. They

grow wiser when it is too late: and, ashamed and vexed at having been bubbles so long, too often turn knaves at last. Do not therefore trust to appearances yourself; you may be sure that nine in ten of mankind do, and ever will, trust to them. I am by no means blamable in desiring to have other people's good word, good will, and affection, if I do not mean to abuse them. Your heart, I know, is good, your sense is sound, and your knowledge extensive. What then remains for you to do? Nothing, but to adorn those fundamental qualifications with such engaging and captivating manners, softness, and gentleness, as will endear you to those who are able to judge of your real merit. I do not mean by this to recommend to you the insipid softness of a gentle fool: no, assert your own opinion, oppose other people's when wrong; but let your manner, your air, your terms, and your tone of voice, be soft and gentle, and that easily and naturally, not affectedly. Use palliatives when you contradict; such as *I may be mistaken*, *I am not sure*, *but I believe*, *I should rather think*, etc. Finish any argument or dispute with some little good-humored pleasantry, to show that you are neither hurt yourself, nor meant to hurt your antagonist; for an argument, kept up a good while, often occasions a temporary alienation on each side. Pray observe particularly, in those French people who are distinguished by that character, that gentleness of habit and manners, which they talk of so much, and value so justly; see in what it consists; in mere trifles, and most easy to be acquired, where the heart is really good. Imitate, copy it, till it becomes habitual and easy to you.

LETTER XL.

My dear Friend, Greenwich, June the 13th, 1751.

The proprieties are a most necessary part of the knowledge of the world. They consist in the relations of persons, things, time, and place; good sense points them out, good company perfects them (supposing always an attention and a desire to please), and good policy recommends them.

Were you to converse with a King, you ought to be as easy and unembarrassed as with your own servant: but yet every look, word, and action should imply the utmost respect. What would be proper and well-bred with others, much your superiors, would be absurd and ill-bred with one so very much so. You must wait till you are spoken to; you must receive, not give, the subject of conversation; and you must even take care that the given subject of such conversation does not lead you into any impropriety.

In mixed companies with your equals (for in mixed companies all people are to a certain degree equal) greater ease and liberty are allowed; but they, too, have their bounds within propriety. There is a social respect necessary: you may start your own subject of conversation with modesty, taking great care, however, never to talk of the gallows in the house of one that has been hanged. Your words, gestures, and attitudes have a greater degree of latitude, though by no means an unbounded one.

That easiness of carriage and behavior, which is exceedingly engaging, widely differs from negligence and inattention, and by no means implies that one may do whatever one pleases; it only means that one is not to be stiff, formal, embarrassed, disconcerted, and ashamed, like country bumpkins, and people who have never been in good company; but it requires great attention to, and a scrupulous observation of, the proprieties; whatever one ought to do is to be done with ease and unconcern. In mixed companies, also, different ages and sexes are to be differently addressed. You would not talk of your pleasures to men of a certain age, gravity, and dignity; they justly expect, from young people, a degree of deference and regard. You should be full as easy with them as with people of your own years: but your manner must be different; more respect must be implied; and it is not amiss to insinuate, that from them you expect to learn. It flatters and comforts age, for not being able to take a part in the joy and titter of youth.

Another important point of the proprieties, seldom enough attended to, is, not to run your own present humor and disposition indiscriminately against everybody: but to observe, conform to, and adopt, theirs. For example; if you happened to be in high good-humor and a flow of spirits, would you go and sing a rollicking song, or cut a caper, to la Maréchale de Coigny, the Pope's Nuncio, or Abbé Sallier, or to any person of natural gravity and melancholy, or who at that time should be in grief? I believe not: as, on the other hand, I suppose that if you were in low spirits, or real grief, you would not choose to bewail your situation with *la petite Blot.*

If you cannot command your present humor and disposition, single out those to converse with, who happen to be in the humor nearest to your own.

Loud laughter is extremely inconsistent with the proprieties, as it is only the illiberal and noisy testimony of the joy of the mob, at some very silly thing. A gentleman is often seen, but very seldom heard, to laugh. Nothing is more contrary to the proprieties than horse-play, or rough play of any kind whatever, and has often very serious, sometimes very fatal, consequences. Romping, struggling, throwing things at one another's head, are the becoming pleasantries of the mob, but degrade a gentleman; the sport of the hand, the sport of the boor, is a very true saying, among the few true sayings of the Italians.

Peremptoriness and decision in young people is contrary to the proprieties: they should seem to assert, and always use some softening, mitigating expression; such as if I may be permitted to say, I should be inclined to think, if I might explain myself, which softens the manner, without giving up, or even weakening, the thing. People of more age and experience expect and are entitled to that degree of deference.

There is a propriety also with regard to people of the lowest degree; a gentleman observes it with his footman, even with the beggar in the street. He considers them as objects of compassion, not of insult; he speaks to neither bluntly, but corrects the one coolly, and refuses the other with humanity. There is no one occasion in the world, in which bluntness is becoming a gentleman. In short, the proprieties are another word for *manners*, and extend

to every part of life. The Graces should attend in order to complete them; the Graces enable us to do, genteelly and pleasingly, what the proprieties require to be done at all. The latter are an obligation upon every man; the former are an infinite advantage and ornament to any man. May you unite both!

LETTER XLI.

My dear Friend, London, June 24th, 1751.

As I open myself, without the least reserve, whenever I think that my doing so can be of any use to you, I will give you a short account of myself when I first came into the world, which was at the age you are of now, so that (by the way) you have got the start of me in that important article by two or three years at least. At nineteen, I left the university of Cambridge, where I was an absolute pedant: when I talked my best, I quoted Horace; when I aimed at being facetious, I quoted Martial; and when I had a mind to be a fine gentlemen, I talked Ovid. I was convinced that none but the ancients had common sense; that the Classics contained everything that was either necessary, useful, or ornamental to men; and I was not without thoughts of wearing the dress of the Romans, instead of the vulgar and illiberal dress of the moderns. With these excellent notions, I went first to The Hague, where, by the help of several letters of recommendation, I was soon introduced into all the best company; and where I very soon discovered that I was totally mistaken in almost every one notion I had entertained. Fortu-

nately, I had a strong desire to please (the mixed result of good nature and a vanity by no means blamable), and was sensible that I had nothing but the desire. I therefore resolved, if possible, to acquire the means, too. I studied attentively and minutely the dress, the air, the manner, the address, and the turn of conversation of all those whom I found to be the people in fashion, and most generally allowed to please. I imitated them as well as I could; if I heard that one man was reckoned remarkably genteel, I carefully watched his dress, motions, and attitudes, and formed my own upon them. When I heard of another, whose conversation was agreeable and engaging, I listened and attended to the turn of it. I addressed myself, though awkwardly, to all the most fashionable, fine ladies; confessed, and laughed with them at my own awkwardness and rawness, recommending myself as an object for them to try their skill in forming. By these means, and with a passionate desire of pleasing everybody, I came by degrees to please some. Does not good nature incline us to please all those we converse with, of whatever rank or station they may be? And does not good sense and common observation show of what infinite use it is to please? Oh! but one may please by the good qualities of the heart, and the knowledge of the head, without that fashionable air, address, and manner, which is mere tinsel. I deny it. A man may be esteemed and respected, but I defy him to please without them. Moreover, at your age, I would not have contented myself with barely pleasing; I wanted to shine, and to distinguish myself in the world as a man of fashion and gallantry, as well as business. And that ambition or

vanity, call it what you please, was a right one; it hurt nobody, and made me exert whatever talents I had It is the spring of a thousand right and good things. Whenever you find yourself engaged insensibly in favor of anybody, of no superior merits nor distinguished talents, examine, and see what it is that has made those impressions upon you: you will find it to be that gentleness of manners, that air and address, which I have so often recommended to you; and from thence draw this obvious conclusion, that what pleases you in them will please others in you; for we are all made of the same clay, though some of the lumps are a little finer, and some a little coarser; but, in general, the surest way to judge of others is to examine and analyze one's self thoroughly. When we meet I will assist you in that analysis, in which every man wants some assistance against his own self-love. Adieu.

LETTER XLII.

My dear Friend, Greenwich, July the 15th, 1751.

To speak without a metaphor, I shall endeavor to assist your youth with all the experience that I have purchased, at the price of seven-and-fifty years. In order to this, frequent reproofs, corrections, and admonitions will be necessary; but then, I promise you, that they shall be in a gentle, friendly, and secret manner; they shall not put you out of countenance in company, nor out of humor when we are alone. I do not expect that, at nineteen, you should have that knowledge of the world, those manners, that dexterity, which few people have at nine-

and-twenty. Two of the most intimate friends in the world can freely tell each other their faults, and even their crimes; but cannot possibly tell each other of certain little weaknesses, awkwardnesses, and blindnesses of self-love; to authorize that unreserved freedom, the relation between us is absolutely necessary. For example: I had a very worthy friend, with whom I was intimate enough to tell him his faults; he had but few; I told him of them, he took it kindly of me, and corrected them. But, then, he had some weaknesses that I could never tell him of directly, and which he was so little sensible of himself, that hints of them were lost upon him. He had a scrag neck, of about a yard long; notwithstanding which, bags being in fashion, truly he would wear one to his wig, and did so; but never behind him, for, upon every motion of his head, his bag came forwards over one shoulder or the other. He took it into his head, too, that he must occasionally dance minuets, because other people did; and he did so, not only extremely ill, but so awkward, so disjointed, so slim, so meager, was his figure, that had he danced as well as ever Marcel did it would have been ridiculous in him to have danced at all. I hinted these things to him as plainly as friendship would allow, and to no purpose; but to have told him the whole, so as to cure him, I must have been his father.

Pray remember to part with all your friends, and acquaintances, in such a manner, as may make them not only willing, but impatient, to see you there again. All people say pretty near the same things upon those occasions, it is the manner only that makes the difference; and that difference is great. Avoid, as much as you can,

charging yourself with commissions, in your return from hence to Paris: I know, by experience, that they are exceedingly troublesome, commonly expensive, and very seldom satisfactory at last to the persons who give them: some you cannot refuse, to people to whom you are obliged, and would oblige in your turn; but as to common fiddle-faddle commissions, you may excuse yourself from them.

LETTER XLIII.

My dear Friend, London, Dec. the 19th, 1751.

You are now entered upon a scene of business, where I hope you will one day make a figure. Use does a great deal, but care and attention must be joined to it. The first thing necessary in writing letters of business, is extreme clearness and perspicuity; every paragraph should be so clear, and unambiguous, that the dullest fellow in the world may not be able to mistake it, nor obliged to read it twice in order to understand it. This necessary clearness implies a correctness, without excluding an elegancy of style. Tropes, figures, antitheses, epigrams, etc., would be as misplaced, and as impertinent, in letters of business, as they are sometimes (if judiciously used) proper and pleasing in familiar letters, upon common and trite subjects. In business, an elegant simplicity, the result of care not of labor, is required. Business must be well, not affectedly, dressed, but by no means negligently. Let your first attention be to clearness, and read every paragraph after you have written it, in the critical view

of discovering whether it is possible that any one man can mistake the true sense of it; and correct it accordingly.

Our pronouns and relatives often create obscurity or ambiguity; be therefore exceedingly attentive to them, and take care to mark out with precision their particular relations. For example: Mr. Johnson acquainted me, that he had seen Mr. Smith, who had promised him to speak to Mr. Clarke, to return him (Mr. Johnson) those papers, which he (Mr. Smith) had left some time ago with him (Mr. Clarke): it is better to repeat a name, though unnecessary, ten times, than to have the person mistaken once. *Who*, you know, is singly relative to persons, and cannot be applied to things; *which*, and *that*, are chiefly relative to things, but not absolutely exclusive of persons; for one may say, the man *that* robbed or killed such-a-one; but it is much better to say, the man *who* robbed or killed. One never says, the man or the woman *which*. *Which* and *that*, though chiefly relative to things, cannot be always used indifferently as to things; and the euphony must sometimes determine their place. For instance; The letter *which* I received from you, *which* you referred to in your last, *which* came by Lord Albemarle's messenger, and *which* I showed to such-a-one; I would change it thus — The letter *that* I received from you, *which* you referred to in your last, *that* came by Lord Albemarle's messenger, and *which* I showed to such-a-one.

Business does not exclude (as possibly you wish it did) the usual terms of politeness and good breeding; but, on the contrary, strictly requires them: such as, *I have the honor to acquaint your Lordship; Permit me to assure you; If I may be allowed to give my opinion, etc.* For the

Minister abroad, who writes to the Minister at home, writes to his superior; possibly to his patron, or at least to one who he desires should be so.

Letters of business will not only admit of, but be the better for, *certain graces:* but then they must be scattered with a sparing and a skilful hand; they must fit their place exactly. They must decently adorn without encumbering, and modestly shine without glaring. But as this is the utmost degree of perfection in letters of business, I would not advise you to attempt those embellishments till you have first laid your foundation well.

Carefully avoid all Greek or Latin quotations: and bring no precedents from the *virtuous Spartans, the polite Athenians, and the brave Romans.* Leave all that to futile pedants. No flourishes, no declamation. But (I repeat it again) there is an elegant simplicity and dignity of style absolutely necessary for good letters of business; attend to that carefully. Let your periods be harmonious, without seeming to be labored; and let them not be too long, for that always occasions a degree of obscurity. I should not mention correct orthography, but that you very often fail in that particular, which will bring ridicule upon you; for no man is allowed to spell ill. I wish, too, that your handwriting were much better: and I cannot conceive why it is not, since every man may certainly write whatever hand he pleases. Neatness in folding up, sealing, and directing your packets, is by no means to be neglected, though I dare say you think it is. But there is something in the exterior, even of a packet, that may please or displease; and consequently worth some attention.

You say that your time is very well employed, and so it is, though as yet only in the outlines and first routine of business. They are previously necessary to be known; they smooth the way for parts and dexterity. Business requires no conjuration nor supernatural talents, as people unacquainted with it are apt to think. Method, diligence, and discretion will carry a man of good strong common sense much higher than the finest parts without them can do. Equal to business, not above it, is the true character of a man of business: but then it implies ready attention, and no *absences;* and a flexibility and versatility of attention from one object to another, without being engrossed by any one.

Be upon your guard against the pedantry and affectation of business, which young people are apt to fall into from the pride of being concerned in it young. They look thoughtful, complain of the weight of business, throw out mysterious hints, and seem big with secrets which they do not know. Do you, on the contrary, never talk of business, but to those with whom you are to transact it. Adieu.

LETTER XLIV.

My dear Friend, London, February the 14th, 1752.

In a month's time, I believe, I shall have the pleasure of sending you, and you will have the pleasure of reading, a work of Lord Bolingbroke's, in two volumes octavo, *upon the use of History.* It is hard to determine whether this work will instruct or please most: the most material historical facts, from the great era of the treaty of Mun-

ster, are touched upon, accompanied by the most solid reflections, and adorned by all that elegancy of style, which was peculiar to himself, and in which, if Cicero equals, he certainly does not exceed him; but every other writer falls short of him. I would advise you almost to get this book by heart. I think you have a turn to history, you love it, and have a memory to retain it; this book will teach you the proper use of it. Some people load their memories, indiscriminately, with historical facts, as others do their stomachs with food; and bring out the one or the other entirely crude and undigested.

Adieu, child. Take care of your health; there are no pleasures without it.

LETTER XLV.

MY DEAR FRIEND, London, March the 5th, 1752.

YOU have not the least notion of any care of your health: but, though I would not have you be a valetudinarian, I must tell you, that the best and most robust health requires some degree of attention to preserve it. Young fellows, thinking they have so much health and time before them, are very apt to neglect or lavish both, and beggar themselves before they are aware: whereas a prudent economy in both, would make them rich indeed; and so far from breaking in upon their pleasures, would improve and almost perpetuate them. Be you wiser; and, before it is too late, manage both with care and frugality; and lay out neither, but upon good interest and security.

You have, it is true, a great deal of time before you; but, in this period of your life, one hour usefully employed may

be worth more than four-and-twenty hereafter; a minute is precious to you now, whole days may possibly not be so forty years hence. Whatever time you allow or can snatch for serious reading (I say snatch, because company, and the knowledge of the world, is now your chief object), employ it in the reading of some one book, and that a good one, till you have finished it: and do not distract your mind with various matters at the same time.

Whatever business you have, do it the first moment you can; never by halves, but finish it without interruption, if possible. The most convenient season for business is the first; but study and business, in some measure, point out their own times to a man of sense; time is much oftener squandered away in the wrong choice and improper methods of amusement and pleasures.

Many people think that they are in pleasures, provided they are neither in study nor in business. Nothing like it; they are doing nothing, and might just as well be asleep. They contract habitudes from laziness, and they only frequent those places where they are free from all restraints and attentions. Be upon your guard against this idle profusion of time: and let every place you go to be either the scene of quick and lively pleasures, or the school of your improvements: let every company you go into, either gratify your senses, extend your knowledge, or refine your manners.

Sloth, indolence, and effeminacy are pernicious and unbecoming a young fellow; let them be your resource forty years hence at soonest. Determine, at all events and however disagreeable it may be to you in some respects, and for some time, to keep the most distinguished

and fashionable company of the place you are at, either for their rank, or for their learning. This gives you credentials to the best companies, wherever you go afterwards. Pray, therefore, no indolence, no laziness; but employ every minute of your life in active pleasures or useful employments. And so we bid you heartily good-night.

LETTER XLVI.

MY DEAR FRIEND, London, April the 13th, 1752.

VOLTAIRE sent me from Berlin his History of the Age of Louis XIV. It came at a very proper time; Lord Bolingbroke had just taught me how History should be read; Voltaire shows me how it should be written. I am sensible that it will meet with almost as many critics as readers. Voltaire must be criticized: besides, every man's favorite is attacked; for every prejudice is exposed, and our prejudices are our mistresses: reason is at best our wife, very often heard indeed, but seldom minded. It is the history of the human understanding written by a man of parts, for the use of men of parts. Weak minds will not like it, even though they do not understand it; which is commonly the measure of their admiration. Dull ones will want those minute and uninteresting details, with which most other histories are encumbered. He tells me all I want to know, and nothing more. His reflections are short, just, and produce others in his readers. Free from religious, philosophical, political, and national prejudices, beyond any historian I ever met with, he relates all those matters as truly and as impartially as certain regards, which

must always be to some degree observed, will allow him; for one sees plainly, that he often says much less than he would say, if he might. He hath made me much better acquainted with the times of Louis XIV. than the innumerable volumes which I had read could do; and hath suggested this reflection to me, which I had never made before — His vanity, not his knowledge, made him encourage all, and introduce many arts and sciences in his country. He opened in a manner the human understanding in France, and brought it to its utmost perfection; his age equaled in all, and greatly exceeded in many things (pardon me, pedants!) the Augustan. This was great and rapid; but still it might be done, by the encouragement, the applause, and the rewards of a vain, liberal, and magnificent prince. What is much more surprising, is, that he stopped the operations of the human mind, just where he pleased; and seemed to say, "thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." For, a bigot to his religion, and jealous of his power, free and rational thoughts upon either never entered into a French head during his reign; and the greatest geniuses that ever any age produced never entertained a doubt of the divine right of Kings, or the infallibility of the Church. Poets, Orators, and Philosophers, ignorant of their natural rights, cherished their chains; and blind active faith triumphed, in those great minds, over silent and passive reason. The reverse of this seems now to be the case in France; reason opens itself; fancy and invention fade and decline.

LETTER XLVII.

MY DEAR FRIEND, London, April the 30th, 1752.

To be well-bred is, in my opinion, a very just and happy expression, for having address, manners, and for knowing how to behave properly in all companies; and it implies, very truly, that a man that hath not these accomplishments is not of the world. Without them, the best parts are inefficient, civility is absurd, and freedom offensive. A learned parson, rusting in his study at Oxford or Cambridge, will reason admirably well upon the nature of man; will profoundly analyse the head, the heart, the reason, the will, the passions, the senses, the sentiments, and all those sub-divisions of we know not what; and yet, unfortunately, he knows nothing of man: for he hath not lived with him; and is ignorant of all the various modes, habits, prejudices, and tastes, that always influence, and often determine him. He views man as he does colors in Sir Isaac Newton's prism, where only the capital ones are seen; but an experienced dyer knows all their various shades and gradations, together with the results of their several mixtures. Few men are of one plain, decided color; most are mixed, shaded, and blended; and vary as much, from different situations, as changeable silks do from different lights. The man who is well-bred knows all this from his own experience and observation: the conceited, cloistered philosopher knows nothing of it from his own theory; his practice is absurd and improper;

and he acts as awkwardly as a man would dance, who had never seen others dance, nor learned of a dancing-master; but who had only studied the notes by which dances are now pricked down, as well as tunes. Observe and imitate, then, the address, the arts, and the manners of those who are well-bred; see by what methods they first make, and afterwards improve, impressions in their favor.

This knowledge of the world teaches us more particularly two things, both which are of infinite consequence, and to neither of which nature inclines us; I mean, the command of our temper and of our countenance. A man who is unaccustomed to society is inflamed with anger, or annihilated with shame, at every disagreeable incident: the one makes him act and talk like a madman, the other makes him look like a fool. But a man of the world seems not to understand what he cannot or ought not to resent. If he makes a slip himself, he recovers it by his coolness, instead of plunging deeper by his confusion, like a stumbling horse. He is firm, but gentle; and practices that most excellent maxim, gentle in manner, strong in truth. The other has the countenance unbent and the thoughts guarded. People unused to the world have babbling countenances; and are unskilful enough to show what they have sense enough not to tell. Adieu!

LETTER XLVIII.

My dear Friend, London, May the 11th, 1752.

Another thing, which I most earnestly recommend to you, not only in Germany, but in every part of the world, where you may ever be, is real attention to whomever you

speak to, or to whoever speaks to you. There is nothing so brutally shocking, nor so little forgiven, as a seeming inattention to the person who is speaking to you; and I have known many a man knocked down, for (in my opinion) a much slighter provocation, than that shocking inattention which I mean. I have seen many people, who while you are speaking to them, instead of looking at, and attending to, you, fix their eyes upon the ceiling, or some other part of the room, look out of the window, play with a dog, twirl their snuff-box, or pick their nose. Nothing discovers a little, futile, frivolous mind more than this, and nothing is so offensively ill-bred; it is an explicit declaration on your part, that every, the most trifling object, deserves your attention more than all that can be said by the person who is speaking to you. Judge of the sentiments of hatred and resentment, which such treatment must excite, in every breast where any degree of self-love dwells; and I am sure, I never yet met with that breast where there was not a great deal. I repeat it again and again (for it is highly necessary for you to remember it), that sort of vanity and self-love is inseparable from human nature, whatever may be its rank or condition; even your footman will sooner forget and forgive a beating, than any manifest mark of slight and contempt. Be therefore, I beg of you not only really, but seemingly and manifestly, attentive to whoever speaks to you.

I am very sure, at least I hope, that you will never make use of a silly expression, which is the favorite expression, and the absurd excuse of all fools and blockheads; *I cannot do such a thing:* a thing by no means either morally or physically impossible. I *cannot* attend

long together to the same thing, says one fool: that is, he is such a fool that he will not. I remember a very awkward fellow, who did not know what to do with his sword, and who always took it off before dinner, saying, that he could not possibly dine with his sword on; upon which I could not help telling him that I really believed he could, without any probable danger either to himself or others. It is a shame and an absurdity, for any man to say, that he cannot do all those things which are commonly done by all the rest of mankind.

Another thing, that I must earnestly warn you against, is laziness; by which more people have lost the fruit of their travels, than (perhaps) by any other thing. Pray be always in motion. Early in the morning go and see things; and the rest of the day go and see people. If you stay but a week at a place, and that an insignificant one, see, however, all that is to be seen there; know as many people, and get into as many houses, as ever you can.

I recommend to you likewise, though probably you have thought of if yourself, to carry in your pocket a map of Germany, in which the post roads are marked; and also some short book of travels through Germany. The former will help to imprint in your memory situations and distances; and the latter will point out many things for you to see, that might otherwise possibly escape you; and which, though they may in themselves be of little consequence, you would regret not having seen, after having been at the places where they were.

Thus warned and provided for your journey, God speed you. Adieu.

LETTER XLIX.

My dear Friend, London, May the 31st, 1752.

As the most tumultuous life, whether of business or pleasure, leaves some vacant moments every day, in which a book is the refuge of a rational being, I mean now to point out to you the method of employing those moments (which will and ought to be but few) in the most advantageous manner. Throw away none of your time upon those trivial futile books, published by idle or necessitous authors, for the amusement of idle and ignorant readers: such sort of books swarm and buzz about one every day; flap them away, they have no sting. Have some one object for those leisure moments, and pursue that object invariably till you have attained it; and then take some other. For instance: considering your destination, I would advise you to single out the most remarkable and interesting era of modern history, and confine all your reading to that era. If you pitch upon the Treaty of Munster (and that is the proper period to begin with, in the course which I am now recommending), do not interrupt it by dipping and deviating into other books, unrelated to it: but consult only the most authentic histories, letters, memoirs, and negotiations relative to that great transaction; reading and comparing them, with all that caution and distrust which Lord Bolingbroke recommends to you, in a better manner and in better words than I can.

I do not mean that you should plod hours together in researches of this kind; no, you may employ your time

more usefully; but I mean that you should make the most of the moments you do employ, by method, and the pursuit of one single object, at a time; nor should I call it a digression from that object, if, when you meet with clashing and jarring pretentions of different princes to the same thing, you had immediate recourse to other books, in which those several pretensions were clearly stated; on the contrary, that is the only way of remembering those contested rights and claims.

All that I have said may be reduced to these two or three plain principles: 1st, That you should now read very little, but converse a great deal; 2ndly, To read no useless, unprofitable books; and 3rdly, That those which you do read, may all tend to a certain object, and be relative to, and consequent of, each other. In this method, half-an-hour's reading, every day, will carry you a great way. People seldom know how to employ their time to the best advantage, till they have too little left to employ; but if, at your age, in the beginning of life, people would but consider the value of it, and put every moment to interest, it is incredible what an additional fund of knowledge and pleasure such an economy would bring in. I look back with regret upon that large sum of time, which, in my youth, I lavished away idly, without either improvement or pleasure. Take warning betimes, and enjoy every moment; pleasures do not commonly last so long as life, and therefore should not be neglected; and the longest life is too short for knowledge, consequently every moment is precious.

LETTER L.

My dear Friend, London, September the 29th, 1752.

There is nothing so necessary, but at the same time there is nothing more difficult (I know it by experience), for you young fellows, than to know how to behave yourselves prudently towards those whom you do not like. Your passions are warm, and your heads are light; you hate all those who oppose your views, either of ambition or love; and a rival in either is almost a synonymous term for an enemy. Whenever you meet such a man, you are awkwardly cold to him, at best; but often rude, and always desirous to give him some indirect slap. This is unreasonable; for one man has as good a right to pursue an employment, or a mistress, as another; but it is into the bargain, extremely imprudent; because you commonly defeat your own purpose by it, and while you are contending with each other a third often prevails. I grant you, that the situation is irksome; a man cannot help thinking as he thinks, nor feeling what he feels; and it is a very tender and sore point to be thwarted and counter-worked in one's pursuits at Court, or with a mistress: but prudence and abilities must check the effects, though they cannot remove the cause. Both the pretenders make themselves disagreeable to their mistress, when they spoil the company by their pouting or their sparring: whereas, if one of them has command enough over himself (whatever he may feel inwardly) to be cheerful, gay, and easily and unaffectedly civil to the other, as if there were no manner of competi-

tion between them, the lady will certainly like him the best, and his rival will be ten times more humbled and discouraged; for he will look upon such a behavior as a proof of the triumph and security of his rival; he will grow outrageous with the lady, and the warmth of his reproaches will probably bring on a quarrel between them. It is the same in business; where he who can command his temper and his countenance the best, will always have an infinite advantage over the other. This is what the French call an honorable and gallant course, to pique yourself upon showing particular civilities to a man, to whom lesser minds would in the same case show dislike, or perhaps rudeness. I will give you an instance of this in my own case; and pray remember it, whenever you come to be, as I hope you will, in a like situation.

When I went to The Hague, in 1744, it was to engage the Dutch to come roundly into the war, and to stipulate their quotas of troops, etc.; your acquaintance, the Abbé de la Ville, was there on the part of France, to endeavor to hinder them from coming into the war at all. I was informed, and very sorry to hear it, that he had abilities, temper, and industry. We could not visit, our two masters being at war; but the first time I met him at a third place, I got somebody to present me to him; and I told him, that though we were to be national enemies, I flattered myself we might be, however, personal friends; with a good deal more of the same kind; which he returned in full as polite a manner. Two days afterwards I went, early in the morning, to solicit the Deputies of Amsterdam, where I found l'Abbé de la Ville, who had been beforehand with me; upon which I addressed myself

to the Deputies, and said, smilingly, "Gentlemen, I am very sorry to find my enemy with you; I already know him well enough to know how formidable he is; the contest is not equal, but I trust myself to your own interests as an offset to the ability of my enemy; and at least, if I have not had the first word to-day, I shall have the last." They smiled: the Abbé was pleased with the compliment, and the manner of it, stayed about a quarter of an hour, and then left me to my Deputies, with whom I continued upon the same tone, though in a very serious manner, and told them that I was only come to state their own true interests to them, plainly and simply, without any of those arts which it was very necessary for my friend to make use of to deceive them. I carried my point, and continued my intercourse with the Abbé; and by this easy and polite commerce with him, at third places, I often found means to fish out from him whereabouts he was.

All acts of civility are, by common consent, understood to be no more than a conformity to custom, for the quiet and convenience of society, the harmony of which is not to be disturbed by private dislikes and jealousies. Only women and little minds pout and spar for the entertainment of the company that always laughs at, and never pities them. For my own part, though I would by no means give up any point to a competitor, yet I would pique myself upon showing him rather more civility than to another man. In the first place, this course infallibly makes all laughers of your side, which is a considerable party; and in the next place, it certainly pleases the object of the competition, be it either man or woman; who never fail to say, upon such an occasion, that *they must*

own you have behaved yourself very handsomely in the whole affair.

Nineteen fathers in twenty, and every mother, who had loved you half as well as I do, would have ruined you; whereas I always made you feel the weight of my authority, that you might one day know the force of my love. Now, I both hope and believe my advice will have the same weight with you from choice, that my authority had from necessity. My advice is just eight-and-thirty years older than your own, and consequently, I believe you think, rather better. As for your tender and pleasurable passions, manage them yourself; but let me have the direction of all the others. Your ambition, your figure, and your fortune will, for some time at least, be rather safer in my keeping than in your own. Adieu.

LETTER LI.

My dear Friend, London, May the 27th, 1753.

I have this day been tired, jaded, nay, tormented, by the company of a most worthy, sensible, and learned man, a near relation of mine, who dined and passed the evening with me. This seems a paradox, but is a plain truth; he has no knowledge of the world, no manners, no address; far from talking without book, as is commonly said of people who talk sillily, he only talks by book; which, in general conversation, is ten times worse. He has formed in his own closet, from books, certain systems of everything, argues tenaciously upon those principles, and is both surprised and angry at whatever deviates from them. His

theories are good, but, unfortunately, are all impracticable. Why? Because he has only read, and not conversed. He is acquainted with books, and an absolute stranger to men. Laboring with his matter, he is delivered of it with pangs; he hesitates, stops in his utterance, and always expresses himself inelegantly. His actions are all ungraceful; so that, with all his merit and knowledge, I would rather converse six hours with the most frivolous tittle-tattle woman, who knew something of the world, than with him. The preposterous notions of a systematical man, who does not know the world, tire the patience of a man who does. It would be endless to correct his mistakes, nor would he take it kindly; for he has considered everything deliberately, and is very sure that he is in the right. Impropriety is a characteristic, and a never-failing one, of these people. Regardless, because ignorant, of custom and manners, they violate them every moment. They often shock, though they never mean to offend; never attending either to the general character, or the particular distinguishing circumstances of the people to whom, or before whom, they talk: whereas the knowledge of the world teaches one that the very same things which are exceedingly right and proper in one company, time, and place, are exceedingly absurd in others. In short, a man who has great knowledge, from experience and observation of the characters, customs, and manners of mankind, is a being as different from, and as superior to, a man of mere book and systematical knowledge, as a well-managed horse is to an ass. Study therefore, cultivate, and frequent, men and women; not only in their outward, and consequently guarded, but in their interior, domestic, and consequently less disguised, char-

acters, and manners. Take your notions of things, as by observation and experience you find they really are, and not as you read that they are or should be; for they never are quite what they should be. For this purpose do not content yourself with general and common acquaintance; but, wherever you can, establish yourself, with a kind of domestic familiarity, in good houses. For instance; go again to Orli for two or three days. Go and stay two or three days at a time at Versailles, and improve and extend the acquaintance you have there. Be at home at St. Cloud; and whenever any private person of fashion invites you to pass a few days at his country-house, accept the invitation. This will necessarily give you a versatility of mind, and a facility to adopt various manners and customs; for everybody desires to please those in whose house they are; and people are only to be pleased in their own way. Nothing is more engaging than a cheerful and easy conformity to people's particular manners and habits. Observe the shining part of every man of fashion, who is liked and esteemed; attend to, and imitate that particular accomplishment for which you hear him chiefly celebrated and distinguished; then collect those various parts, and make yourself a mosaic of the whole. No one body possesses everything, and almost everybody possesses some one thing worthy of imitation: only choose your models well; and, in order to do so, choose by your ear more than by your eye. Adieu.

LETTER LII.

MY DEAR FRIEND, London, February 26th, 1754.

NOW, that you are soon to be a man of business, I heartily wish you would immediately begin to be a man of method, nothing contributing more to facilitate and dispatch business than method and order. Have order and method in your accounts, in your reading, in the allotment of your time, in short, in everything. You cannot conceive how much time you will save by it, nor how much better everything you do will be done. The Duke of Marlborough did by no means spend, but he slatterned himself into that immense debt, which is not yet near paid off. The hurry and confusion of the Duke of Newcastle do not proceed from his business, but from his want of method in it. Sir Robert Walpole, who had ten times the business to do, was never seen in a hurry, because he always did it with method. The head of a man who has business, and no method nor order, is properly a chaos. As you must be conscious that you are extremely negligent and slatternly, I hope you will resolve not to be so for the future. Prevail with yourself only to observe good method and order for one fortnight, and I will venture to assure you that you will never neglect them afterwards, you will find such conveniency and advantage arising from them. Method is the great advantage that lawyers have over other people in speaking in Parliament; for, as they must necessarily observe it in their pleadings in the Courts of

Justice, it becomes habitual to them everywhere else. Experience you cannot yet have, and therefore trust in the meantime to mine. I am an old traveler; am well acquainted with all the by, as well as the great, roads; I cannot misguide you from ignorance, and you are very sure I shall not from design.

I can assure you that you will have no opportunity of subscribing yourself, my Excellency's, etc. Retirement and quiet were my choice some years ago, while I had all my senses, and health and spirits enough to carry on business; but now I have lost my hearing, and find my constitution declining daily, they are become my necessary and only refuge. I know myself (no common piece of knowledge, let me tell you), I know what I can, what I cannot, and consequently what I ought to do. I ought not, and therefore will not, return to business, when I am much less fit for it than I was when I quitted it. Statesmen and beauties are very rarely sensible of the gradations of their decay; and, too sanguinely hoping to shine on in their meridian, often set with contempt and ridicule. I retired in time, as Pope says, "Ere tittering youth shall shove you from the stage." My only remaining ambition is to be the Counsellor and Minister of your rising ambition. Let me see my own youth revived in you; let me be your Mentor, and, with your parts and knowledge, I promise you, you shall go far. You must bring, on your part, activity and attention, and I will point out to you the proper objects for them. I own I fear but one thing for you, and that is what one has generally the least reason to fear, from one of your age; I mean your laziness, which if you indulge, will make you

stagnate in a contemptible obscurity all your life. It will hinder you from doing anything that will deserve to be written, or from writing anything that may deserve to be read; and yet one or other of these two objects should be at least aimed at by every rational being. I look upon indolence as a sort of *suicide;* for the Man is effectually destroyed, though the appetites of the Brute may survive. Business by no means forbids pleasure; on the contrary, they reciprocally season each other; and I will venture to affirm, that no man enjoys either in perfection that does not join both. They whet the desire for each other. Use yourself therefore in time, to be alert and diligent in your little concerns; never procrastinate, never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day; and never do two things at a time; pursue your object, be it what it will, steadily and indefatigably; and let any difficulties (if surmountable) rather animate than slacken your endeavors. Perseverance has surprising effects.

I wish you would accustom yourself to translate, every day, only three or four lines from any book, in any language, into the most correct and most elegant English that you can think of; you cannot imagine how it will insensibly form your style, and give you an habitual elegancy; it would not take a quarter of an hour in a day. This letter is so long, that it will hardly leave you that quarter of an hour, the day you receive it. So good-night.

LETTER LIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Blackheath, Sept. the 30th, 1763.

THE present inaction, I believe, gives you leisure enough for mental weariness, but it gives you time enough, too, for better things; I mean reading useful books; and, what is still more useful, conversing with yourself some part of every day. Lord Shaftesbury recommends self-conversation to all authors; and I would recommend it to all men; they would be the better for it. Some people have not time, and fewer have inclination, to enter into that conversation; nay, very many dread it, and fly to the most trifling dissipations, in order to avoid it; but if a man would allot half-an-hour every night for this self-conversation, and recapitulate with himself whatever he has done, right or wrong, in the course of the day, he would be both the better and the wiser for it. My deafness gives me more than sufficient time for self-conversation; and I have found great advantages from it. My brother, and Lady Stanhope, are at last finally parted. If he had had some of those self-conversations which I recommend, he would not, I believe, at past sixty, with a crazy, battered constitution, and deaf into the bargain, have married a young girl, just turned of twenty, full of health, and consequently of desires. But who takes warning by the fate of others? This, perhaps, proceeds from a negligence of self-conversation. God bless you!

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